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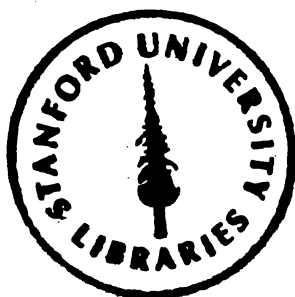
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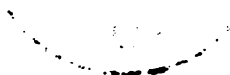








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J. J. Davis W. J. Smith

January 4th 1912





Yours Truly.

W Donaldson



RECOLLECTIONS OF AN ACTOR

BY
Alfred
WALTER DONALDSON
11
COMEDIAN



NEVER BEFORE PRINTED

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PREFACE

WHEN a man has long passed the scriptural confines of life,—the emphatic three-score-and-ten,—he may be acquitted of all vanity of authorship, all idea of frivolous display, in throwing his production on the waters of public opinion ; and hope behind the ægis of *seventy-six* winters to obtain the indulgence of the reader, while he escapes the censure of the critic.

Such consideration on the one side, and kindly neglect on the other, the Author of these "Recollections" solicits, less on account of his age than from the generous indulgence of those he is pleased to regard as his patrons.

The events which occur in the life of every man, if honestly and impartially recounted, possess, however imperfectly told, a certain amount of interest, and often of instruction ; but the career of a provincial actor, whose professional duties are perpetually leading him into new scenes, mixing him up with fresh characters, and associating him in a sort of masonic brotherhood with theatricals of all specialities of art and degrees of professional excellence, affords opportunities, indeed advantages, for collecting facts, hearing anecdotes, and observing natural beauties of scenery, that seldom fall to the lot of any other individual.

The consequent gleaning of such facts and scraps, spread over a harvest-time of sixty years, can hardly fail, when bound up in the literary sheaf of a volume, to afford some amount of amusement to those who take pleasure in the sayings and doings of the profession, the records of the stage, or the *on-dits* of past and present theatrical celebrities.

Such anas—the collection of a long life—jotted down from memory years after they occurred, but authentic in

all their main features, are here presented to the public, in the belief that to the lover of the drama facts associated with such names as Kemble, Macklin, Cooke, Elliston, Macready, Booth, Hollman, Mrs. Siddons, Mrs. Renaud, Miss Smith (Mrs. Bartley), Miss O'Neill, and many others who, since the opening of the present century, have figured on the English and French stage, will to a certain extent be acceptable, and at least afford a few half-hours of pleasant and faithful reminiscence.

The assassination of President Lincoln has given an unenviable notoriety to the name of Booth; yet the author believes that the account to be found in these pages of the assassin's father, Junius Brutus Booth, will be read with some degree of interest, because it was written long previous to the Washington tragedy, and has the advantage of being drawn from personal knowledge and an almost intimate acquaintance with that at times most excitable character.

The death of Mrs. T. Moore, the widow of Ireland's great poet, since this work was placed in the printer's hands, has prevented the fact of her decease being recorded in its proper place, under those anecdotes connected with Miss Dyke (Mrs. Moore) and the poet in their youthful days, when the one as an actress, and the other as an amateur, charmed the fashionable society of Kilkenny.

A few omissions, mortuary and otherwise, may have occurred among that galaxy of genius and talent, in the musical and histrionic branches of art, with whom the author in his days of youth and vigour mixed or associated; but when it is borne in mind that infirmity and accident have impaired his physical energies, and compelled him in his old age to educate his *left* hand to write his manuscript, he hopes that some allowance will be made for any imperfections which may be found in his "RECOLLECTIONS OF AN ACTOR'S LIFE."

London, October 1865.

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CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

Reflections on the vitiated taste of the Public in respect to Dramatic Literature; and on the necessity of a strictly National Theatre—Recollections of the Dublin Theatre Royal in 1809—Frederick Edwin Jones—Memoir of Montague Talbot—Richard Jones—Lines by Crofton Croker—Charles Young, first appearance—Biographical sketch of Henry Johnson—T. P. Cooke as Clown, and James Wallack as Low Comedian—Memoir of the celebrated Belzoni; his career as a Mountebank and an Explorer of Egyptian antiquities p. 1

CHAPTER II.

Reminiscences of Dublin continued—Jack Johnstone—His successful career as a delineator of Irish Character—Gives his daughter 20,000*l.* on her marriage with James Wallack—Robert William Elliston—Holman and Elliston compared—Conway—Mrs. Jordan's *début* in Dublin—Death of an Actor on the Stage—Williams—First appearance of Thomas Phillipps the Vocalist—Salaries fifty years ago—Miss Smith (Mrs. Bartley) as Lady Macbeth—Mrs. Stewart and Mrs. Liston—The Misses Dykes—Tom Cooke and the Orchestra of the Dublin Theatre—Cooke's success as a Vocalist—Amateur theatricals at Kilkenny, with Moore the Poet, and Sir Wm. Beecher, Miss O'Neill's husband, in the cast—Remarkable marriages of Actresses—How to cure a stage-struck youth—Horsewhipping Lord Randolph p. 28

CHAPTER III.

Miss O'Neill—Memoir of Conway—New Theatre in Hawkins Street—Anecdote of the lady who was buried alive—Manager Harwood—The Preaching Player—Edmund Kean and Connolly—Sheridan Knowles, in the double capacity of strolling actor and schoolmaster p. 71

CHAPTER IV.

A Strolling Company in the West of Scotland—Greenock and the scenery of the Clyde—The last days of an old Actor—Moss, Macklin's pupil—A Manager and his Company in the Lock-up—The Players driven from Whitehaven, because they frightened the herrings from the nets—London Theatricals in 1816—The Rival Houses—Kean, Mrs. Bartley, Sinclair, Emery, Miss Stephens, Mrs. Egerton—Lucius Junius Brutus Booth—Maywood: his *début* and failure—Croyden Theatre in 1817—Tyrone Power in 1818 and 1834—Opening of the Coburg, and list of Company—Theatre at Peckham—Buckstone as Walking Gentleman, and Power as Light Comedian—Greenwich Theatre opened by Saville Faucit—Planché's *début* as an Actor—First appearance of Miss Huddart—Mrs. Warner p. 88

CHAPTER V.

Reading Circuit—Anecdote of Thornton the Manager—Stockton—Emley—Weymouth in its palmy days—George the Third's nightly Visit to the little Theatre—The King's kindly consideration towards a poor Actor—Novel way of erecting a Theatre—The Nottingham Circuit under Manly and Robertson—'Beggars and Ballad-singers'—Salaries in the Nottingham Circuit—Wrench—Exchange of Lovers—Eccentric Conduct of Manly—Anecdote of Webb and Davis—A Theatrical Challenge—An Actor's sense of Honour p. 113

CHAPTER VI.

Liverpool—Dramatic privileges forty years ago—Banks and Lewis—Fatal Duel between Booth and Diavolo Antonio the Slack-wire Dancer—Lewis's munificent Gift to the Nation—Mrs. Glover's Hamlet—Southampton under Maxfield—Kelly and Collins—Sheridan Knowles—Mr. and Mrs. West—Maria, Ellen, and Anne Tree—Fawcett and Bannister—The Young Roscius—Incedon's Farewell at Southampton; his meanness and vanity—Memoir of Dowton; his Address on Incedon's retirement—Braham—Liston—Fawcett—Manchester—Elton—Stanfield—Memoir of David Rees, p. 134

CHAPTER VII.

Bristol—'Mother Goose'—Bradbury the Clown—Liston—Sunderland—Stephen Kemble—The original Jem Baggs—Rayner—The African Roscius—Hamlet and Othello's dress

CONTENTS.

vii

in Garrick's time—Newcastle—Sam Butler—Kean as Harlequin in 'Mother Goose'—Windsor Theatre—Benjamin Webster as the Low Comedian—M. Laurent, Director of the Italian Opera—Speculation of the English dramatic Company in Paris—List of the Company engaged, with the Salaries given—Miss Smithson—Terry, Abbott, Miss Foote, Bond, Charles Mason, &c.—Italian Opera at Paris—Malibran—Rossini—Balfe—The *Claqueurs* of the French Theatre—Michael Kelly—The French Stage in 1828—Reflections on Edmund Kean's acting of Richard, Othello, Shylock, and Macbeth—Honours paid to Charles Kean—Presentation of Plate p. 158

CHAPTER VIII.

Professor Blackie on Dramatic Literature—Tax levied in France for the poor on all Theatrical Amusements—French Pawnbrokers—Government grants to French Theatres—Rachel as a girl singing in the *cafés*—Peg Woffington—Theatrical Fund in France—A poor Musician—Salaries of Tom Cooke, Kean, George Frederick Cooke, Garrick, &c.—Social and domestic subjects of England and France—English Clowns and Pantomimes introduced into Paris p. 211

CHAPTER IX.

Kean engaged at the Olympic for 4*l.* a-week, but secured by Drury Lane—The Management clear 18,000*l.* the first Season, and are saved from Bankruptcy—John Kemble's failure in Gloucestershire, and Sir Giles Overreach—Macready kissed on the Stage by a Mob of excited Frenchmen—Second attempt to establish the English Drama in France in 1844—Sensible Arrangement as regards Talent and Salaries on the Parisian Stage—Paganini swindled at Birmingham—Novel arrangement about Benefits in Paris—Marshal Ney—Père-la-Chaise—The Napoleon Museum—The Irish Brigade p. 233

CHAPTER X.

The Author returns to England—Western Circuit—Weymouth, natural and artificial Beauties of the Town and Country—The Royal Box at the Theatre—Rise of the Bedford Family—Isle of Portland, ancient History—George III. teaching a Peasant's Wife how to make a Plum-pudding—Duchess of St. Alban's generosity—Recitations and Lectures the ruin of the Drama—Furbeck and Corfe Castle—The Romans and Saxons—A native Genius—The Channel Islands—Guernsey described; natural Characters and Climate—

Smugglers' Caves—The Capital, St. Peter's Port—Public Buildings—Theatre and Theatricals—Historical Recollections—Price of Commodities—Kean meets with a generous Patron—Laws of the Island—Fertility and Beauty of the Soil and Climate *p.* 263

CHAPTER XI.

The Islands continued—Different Classes of the Inhabitants; divided according to their incomes—An effective Police-force of *three* Officers and *one* Man—Jersey, St. Helier's; Natural Beauties and Geological Characters of the Island—The Theatre, Castle, and Public Buildings—Historical Recollections—View of Jersey from the Prince's Tower—Theatricals and Amateurs—Meeting Chippendale and old friends—M. Alexandre the conjuror—Mr. O'Neill, nephew of Lady Beecher—Vicissitudes of a Lecturer's career—Hugo Vamp, *alias* O'Neill—Gerald Griffin, author of 'The Collegians'—Colman, the licenser of plays—Banim and the O'Hara Tales—Remarks on Sheridan Knowles—Opinion on the London Theatres in 1824—Mrs. Siddons's prophecy of the future greatness of Macready, while a youth in his father's company *p.* 293

CHAPTER XII.

The Drama and its objects—Arnold, manager of the Lyceum—Opinion of the English Opera—Lines on the Poets of the day—Griffin's Career—Kemble's progress in London—his Retirement and Death—Conclusion *p.* 334



RECOLLECTIONS OF AN ACTOR



CHAPTER I.

Reflections on the vitiated taste of the Public in respect to Dramatic Literature ; and on the necessity of a strictly National Theatre—Recollections of the Dublin Theatre Royal in 1809—Frederick Edwin Jones—Memoir of Montague Talbot—Richard Jones—Lines by Crofton Croker—Charles Young, first appearance—Biographical sketch of Henry Johnson—T. P. Cooke as Clown, and James Wallack as Low Comedian—Memoir of the celebrated Belzoni ; his career as a Mountebank, and an Explorer of Egyptian Antiquities.

THOSE members of the community who have witnessed sixty or seventy summers have ever expressed their opinion in respect to the state of the drama in the present day, and lament its decadence.

Those aged characters have been pronounced by their more juvenile brethren as “dotards” and “enemies to progression”—plainly intimating that

the drama has made as rapid strides as science and the arts in general.

If we come to look at the scenic effects and the details of the theatre at the present time, certainly there is no denying this assertion; but where can we witness the sublime efforts of a Kemble or a Siddons, or be roused to ecstasy by the mercurial flights of a Lewis or an Elliston? Alas! nowhere. Instead of displays of extraordinary powers in nightly changes of our pure and legitimate drama, the town is bored with a sensational production that monopolises the whole of a season, and thus strikes at the root of all improvement in the actor, who night after night and week after week walks on and off the stage like a piece of mechanism.

A highly-talented journalist, a short time since, speaking on the degeneracy of the drama, says: "A manager who is making his fortune by showing a series of scenes, which culminate in a brutal Irish murder, can call in the law to restrain a body of gentlemen who may take a hall and enact a Greek or Latin play or a tragedy of Shakespeare's, if admission is charged for at the doors.

"The educated, and those who desire to be so, are actually debarred from high-class relaxation for the sake of protecting vested interests in comparative *rubbish*—for theatres constantly open for the higher drama will not pay; but occasional per-

performances, in which a high standard could be aimed at, and *natural* instead of *theatrical** acting might be practised, would probably do so, and would set an example that might produce good.

“But these are unlawful; and a manager who should open a house on such conditions would be fined, and sent to prison if he did not pay the fine. The only objection to a free drama is one which only frightens those who half think.

“There are a number of music-halls, in which a very low class amuse themselves with bad music and worse singing, interspersed with most abject ribaldry—it is ‘feared’ that throwing open the drama would encourage these places.”

I cannot fall in with the views of the above writer, that free-trade in theatrical matters would advance the legitimate drama.

Free-trade, certainly, in corn has given the poor man a cheap loaf; but in a dramatic sense it would have a contrary effect.

If we look back to the period when the two great metropolitan theatres possessed the patent right and monopolised the drama, what city in Europe could vie with London for talent of the very first order?—but the moment the door of the

* By this remark we are to understand that experienced actors are not natural—that is, only to be found within the walls of an amateur theatre. This is news indeed,

Temple of the Muses was opened, every adventurer rushed in, and the divine bard was superseded for mummery and extravaganza.

They manage these things much better in Paris by the admirable arrangement in regard to the recreations of the people—rendering it a matter of impossibility for any publican to encroach on the rights of the theatre by erecting a stage on his premises.

The *writer* just quoted has laid down a plan which he conceives would be likely to restore the public taste for the works of our best authors—which is, for a number of gentlemen of talent and education to form a society, take a building, and perform our sterling and legitimate drama.

This, I am afraid, would never produce the desired effect. No matter what innate ability an individual may possess—no matter how educated, aided, and assisted in personal accomplishments, and adorned with elocutionary powers—yet without *provincial* experience, a judicious audience could not be satisfied.

The dramatic profession is an art, and acknowledged by the first men in the land as the most difficult in existence; then, if it surpasses the military art in attainment, it must have the same means of accomplishing its mysteries.

In the army, before a man is intrusted with a

command, he must have gone through the various grades—such as sub-lieutenant, lieutenant, captain, major, and lieutenant-colonel. And in the navy, the aspirant—even if a scion of Royalty—must take his position in the gun-room as the humble middy before he is entitled to the epaulette of the lieutenant.

So in the dramatic art. To form the accomplished actor, at least one capable of going through the ordeal of a metropolitan audience, actual experience is necessary.

If we search the history of the stage, we shall find that the Kembles, Siddonses, Jordans, Cookes, Keans, and O'Neills, all gained their proficiency in the humble and unassuming country theatre; and all were cheered and encouraged by an unsophisticated public, unswayed by partial and fulsome flattery in the shape of newspaper critiques.

In such places people go to be amused, and are determined to judge for themselves, independent of all puffing—consequently, a true estimate was found of the actor's merits; but in the case of a number of *amateur gentlemen* attempting, for instance, such a tragedy as 'Othello,' the ancient critic, that perhaps had witnessed Kean and Young in the Moor and Iago, would not be over-tenacious in giving a public opinion which might damage the theatrical undertaking. No; there is

only one mode likely to restore the public taste, and that is to erect a theatre in the metropolis to be devoted exclusively to the legitimate drama of the country.

A theatre that should be free from pantomime, burlesque, and all trifling productions—in fact, on such principles as the Théâtre Français in Paris—open all the year round, and where the intellectual may go and witness the sterling and elevating drama of the nation at any time.

Then, it may be asked, how can such a structure be raised, how supported, if deprived of the golden harvest at Christmas—the entertainment for the old and young children—“the comic pantomime”? Why, by the same means as they have raised funds for an “Opera Company;” and surely we have sufficient wealth and mind to form such an establishment, where the works of the greatest writers of any country could be represented, worthy of the nation which stands as the first in wealth and enterprise throughout the world.

It is true, that at first the difficulties will be great; so they were in the United States before an army of efficiency was formed.

The actor, like the soldier, demands a drilling; the tutor in the college or drawing-room cannot do much; the barn and the country manager will do more, for his is a *practical* art. But for a London

legitimate theatre, what manager is the most eligible to satisfy the ideas of those that wish to witness the days of Kemble revived? Why, such a man as succeeded David Garrick—Richard Brinsley Sheridan; not an *acting* manager, but one capable of presiding over the drama, free from the petty jealousies of a Garrick or any other theatrical despot.

What was the consequence of Sheridan's rule at old Drury? An advance in the actor's income, and the introduction of the greatest woman of her age to a London audience—Mrs. Siddons. Not only was the queen of tragedy placed on the highest pinnacle of dramatic fame by the author of the 'School for Scandal;' but another wonder, the most surprising comic actress of any country, Mrs. Jordan, came on the heels of the classic Siddons.

These authenticated facts cannot be denied by the most bigoted biographer,—that Sheridan was the chief instrument in bringing Mrs. Siddons to London after the slight which her great talent had received from Garrick is well known; and no sooner was her position established, than the brother, "the noblest Roman of them all"—John Kemble—was added to the establishment; and thus at the same time Sheridan had under his watchful eye three of the greatest performers of that age—Mrs. Siddons, Mrs. Jordan, and John Kemble.

When cares, troubles, and disappointments, shook the mind and frame of the noble patriot and dramatist, and he retired from management, the crowning act of his sway over old Drury was his pilotage of the greatest tragedian that ever trod the boards of a London theatre—Edmund Kean. He saw at a glance the vigorous and unapproachable assumptions of Kean, and at once pursued that course which gave every facility to the full display of those original talents—seldom the rule with *acting* managers, and so widely opposite to the treatment which Mossup, Macklin, Mrs. Siddons, and the father of Richard Brinsley Sheridan, received from the English Roscius.

According to Watkins's 'Life of Sheridan,' the palmy days of the drama were in the time of Garrick; and the statesman, orator, and dramatist, absolutely did nothing during his career as caterer for the public. The records of the drama fully confute such assertions.

It is a notorious fact that the salaries in Garrick's day were on the most limited scale; so much so, that Reddish, celebrated as the second to the English Roscius, had only 5*l.* a week, and there were some performers on a stipend as low as 1*l.*; while in Sheridan's time, 4*l.*, 8*l.*, 12*l.*, 18*l.*, and up to 40*l.*, were the liberal terms given by the spirited manager.

Let us take a glance at Covent Garden during the reign of the two Harrises.

The drama in that great rival establishment was acknowledged as the first in Europe in every department; but the moment these men retired, and the rule fell into the hands of those that *acted*, then the drama began to sink, and finally disappeared altogether; while this mighty fabric, which had been reared with such care for so many years, was deposed by a foreign opera.

These historical facts prove that a man in no way connected with the stage or the profession is the most eligible to manage a national theatre of the first order. In the forming of a new company in London, favouritism and family cliques have a deal to do in the affair; but were a council of men, strangers to actors in general, to decide the question, talent would have a much better chance of notice than it has in the present day, when mere novices, by recommendation only, take precedence of experience and ability.

As public companies are established to erect monster hotels and opera-houses, perhaps in time a company may be formed to elevate a theatre perfect in all its details, and capable of vying with the national theatre of France; where the dramas of the noblest writer of them all may be represented with all the adornments which the genius of Wil-

liam Shakespeare demands, and the leading people of the world expect.

In presenting the following work to the public, it is done with a hope that it may be found beneficial to the drama, and create an interest in the rising generation for days gone by, when London could boast of a staff of actors that might bid defiance to any other city in the way of competition.

Many imagine that the legitimate drama is sunk for ever. I do not hold such an opinion. The histrionic art has still powerful and able advocates, and one, not the least, has just been taken from us, the Duke of Newcastle. This distinguished friend of the drama has declared publicly "that it may be created into a gigantic instrument of education."

The Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, has gone so far as to say "that Religion herself has not always disdained to find in it a direct handmaid for the attainment of her own purposes."

Those two great men may be looked upon as the organ of the leading class of society; and prove that, if proper measures were pursued, the days of Kemble and Siddons may be revived again in the metropolis of the Empire. And those measures are the establishment of a theatre in London for the sole works of our sterling writers,

and where the taste of the refined and enlightened may not be diverted from the classic dramatists which England has produced, and which have assisted in the civilisation of this powerful country. Is the same stimulus in existence now which half a century back roused our youth to abandon the University, the Church, and the Army for the Stage? Certainly not. At that period London could boast of two great dramatic theatres that expended in salaries alone two thousand pounds weekly.

To reach such a proud position, the aspirant fled to the provinces. Here, in the barn or in the lowly theatre, he underwent vicissitudes and trials that afterwards, when fortune smiled, the very recital of served to amuse the exalted and learned guests at the social board.

At the beginning of the present century the Dublin Theatre contributed its quota of talent to the London boards. Dublin at this time, according to the 'New Monthly,' was the most joyous city in the Empire; trade was good, provisions cheap, and the country was favoured by a local Parliament and a resident gentry. The latter advantage was owing to the "Ogre," which blocked up the Seine, Rhine, and the Danube.

The Theatre Royal, Crow Street, was at that time under the management of Frederick Edwin

Jones, a gentleman by birth and education, two very great points in favour of actors and the public. Fortunately for the true interest of the drama, the manager did not act himself; and consequently merit had its free scope, without that thwarting which is generally the case when the manager is himself an actor.

Montague Talbot was the light comedian of Dublin. His line of characters were the elegant and refined gentleman of the old school, such as—Ranger in ‘The Suspicious Husband,’ Doricourt in ‘The Belle’s Stratagem,’ Mirabel in ‘The Inconstant,’ Rolando in ‘The Honeymoon,’ Lord Duke in ‘High Life below Stairs,’ Lord Ogleby in ‘The Clandestine Marriage,’ Charles Surface, and Monsieur Morbleu. Talbot was a distinct actor from Lewis, who excelled in another range, such as Rover, Goldfinch, Vapid, Tom Shuffleton, and Mercutio. When a distinguished writer leaves behind his opinion of an actor’s abilities, that ought to be received as the strongest proof of talent. Crofton Croker, in his splendid work the *Familiar Epistles*, published in Dublin in 1805, speaks of Talbot in the following lines:

“First Talbot comes—the first indeed—
But fated never to succeed
In the discerning eyes of those
Who form their taste on Kemble’s nose,

And deem that genius a dead loss is
 Without dark eyebrows and long proboscis,
 Talbot certainly must despair
 To rival Kemble's sombrous stare,
 Or reach that quintessence of charms
 With which black Roscius folds his arms,
 A trifling air and stripling form,
 Ill fitted to the tragic storm ;
 A baby face, that sometimes shows
 Alike in transports as in woes,
 Will ne'er permit him to resemble
 Or soar the tragic flights of Kemble ;
 Yet in some scenes, together placed,
 With *greater* feeling—*equal* taste
 From a judicious audience draws
 As *much* and as deserved applause.
 But whatsoe'er his *tragic* claim,
 He reigns o'er comedy *supreme*—
 By art and nature chastely fit
 To play the gentleman or wit ;
 Not Harris's nor Colman's boards,
 Nor all that Drury Lane affords,
 Can paint the rakish Charles so well,
 Or give so much life to Mirabel,
 Or show for light and airy sport
 So *exquisite* a Doricourt."

With such rare qualities, Talbot could not get a position in London. Both of the great houses were barred against him; and finding metropolitan renown was out of his reach, he determined to remain in a land that appreciated his abilities; and in 1809 the Belfast Theatre came under his sway,

where for a number of years he ruled the destinies of the drama with credit and honour.

He was engaged by Henry Harris in 1821 for the Hawkins's Theatre, Dublin, and made his *début* in Moncrieff's excellent farce of 'Monsieur Tonson.'

Talbot's French barber made such a hit that the farce ran for sixty nights. Such a circumstance was unprecedented in the annals of the drama. After the termination of the season, proposals were made to him to visit London. But he declined them all, and remained among a people who venerated him till the period of his death.

Talbot was no favourite among London actors; this was partly the result of envy for one who had too much talent for their appreciation.

Charles Kemble in 1812 came to Dublin on a starring tour with Mrs. C. Kemble, and made his *début* in Talbot's great part, Mirabel. He did not repeat it, or attempt any other in that line.

The elder Mathews, hearing of Talbot's fame in the French barber, Monsieur Morbleu, entered the lists against him, and most egregiously failed, and left the city in dudgeon after the first night's performance.

Some years ago, a ridiculous and impossible story went the round of the London journals respecting the vagaries introduced by Talbot in the

Ghost of Hamlet's father. He was called 'Paddy Talbot' by those writers that always know every thing and every body. Talbot ever prided himself on his nationality and as being a branch of the English family of that celebrated name, so renowned in the history of Shakespeare's idol, Harry of Monmouth.

Richard Jones, better known to a metropolitan public than his contemporary Talbot, began his career in Dublin as a mere stripling, fresh from his native Birmingham, where his honoured parent dealt in, not buttons, but deals; in fact he was, like Lubin Log's father, a timber-merchant.

Jones soon made his way into the good graces of the Dublin people by his social manners in private, and his public efforts on the stage. Jones was not so fastidious as his brother comedian Talbot in respect to the rank of his society. As long as the party had the appearance and manners of respectability, he was satisfied; in fact, Jones had a benefit in view, and he always had a "bumper," while Montague Talbot attended the Heralds'-office to see if Mr. So-and-so was a fit and proper companion to associate with, that the high blood in his veins might not be disgraced.

Although Jones was considered only in a *secondary* degree to Talbot in Dublin, yet he found his way to Covent Garden, and maintained the

highest position over every other actor in Lewis's line of characters.

The following lines by Crofton Croker are from the *Familiar Epistles*:

“ Who is this? all boots and breeches,
Cravat and cape, and spurs and switches,
Grins and grimaces, shrugs and capers,
With affectation, spleen, and vapours?
Oh, Mr. Richard Jones, your humble—
Prithce give o'er to mouth and mumble;
Stand still, speak plain, and let us hear
What was intended for the ear.
In faith, without the timely aid
Of bills, no part you ever played—
Bob Handy, Shuffleton, or Rover,
Sharper, stroller, lounger, lover
Could, amid your madcap pother,
Ever distinguish from each other.
'Tis true that Lewis jumps and prates,*
And mumbles and extravagates;
And it equally as true is
That, Mr. Jones, you are not Lewis.
If, Jones, to your ear my caustic lays
May seem too niggard of their praise,
Perhaps 'tis true, and shall I own
They seem not so to you alone?
And fear'd I not to turn a brain
Already too volatile and vain,

* The old comedians, such as Lewis, Manders, Elliston, and Jack Johnston, talked a great deal to themselves on that stage, and uttered inexpressible things that the author never dreamt of; thus casting to the winds Shakespeare's advice to the players.

And were I not anxious to express
 Youthful ambition's wild excess,
 I'd say, 'It equally as true is
 That, Mr. Jones, you *may* be Lewis.'"

Jones's father, the timber-merchant in Birmingham, was celebrated in his native town as an excellent amateur actor; his son was a chip of the old block, and even among his brethren of the sock and buskin was not considered a stick.

About 1808 Lewis retired from the London stage, and this never-equalled comedian recommended to the management of Covent Garden Richard Jones. Not but there was another light comedian of equal talent to Jones; this was Melvin, an actor of extraordinary ability, not only in the Gossamers and Mercutios, but in the weather-beaten tars.

In 1809 Richard Jones made his *début* at Covent Garden in Macklin's comedy of 'Love à la Mode.' George Cooke was Sir Archy MacSarcasm; Sir Callaghan O'Brallaghan, Jack Johnstone; Beau Mordecai, Simmons; Squire Groom, R. Jones; and Charlotte, Mrs. St. Leger.

'Love à la Mode' is called a farce; but according to the material which Macklin has thrown into it, I consider it a comedy, as we have no farce in the English language possessing such characters. Lewis attended behind the scenes to witness his *protégé's* first attempt; and when the cue was given

for his entrance on the stage, Jones became transfixed with fear, and instead of giving the "view halloo," was struck dumb and became immovable. Lewis, perceiving the dilemma of the new actor, roared "Yoicks, yoicks!" The audience hearing those well-known sounds, exclaimed, "A second Lewis!" then, slapping Jones on the back, he told him "to go in and win." Jones taking courage, dashed on the stage, amidst the most deafening plaudits; and as he paced about in his jockey dress—thus showing off his slim, tall, and well-formed person—minutes absolutely elapsed ere he could utter a word for the applause. His success was most complete, and Jones remained in London as the true successor of Lewis as long as the legitimate drama had a home; then he retired, and devoted his latter years to pulpit eloquence, or giving instruction to those elevated personages intended as dignitaries of the Church.

Charles Mayne Young about the same time was engaged for the same line of business in London. Certainly there was a great difference in the two men in regard to declamatory ability. Those who can recollect Young's Hamlet must admit that it has never been excelled since his day, and I question if it has ever been equalled. However, if Jones was celebrated for his flippancy and rattling rollicking mode of utterance, as an elocution mas-

ter he has fitted for their position some of the first men in the Church. An engraving of Jones in F. Potter's 'Belle's Stratagem,' may be seen at Lacy's, Theatrical Publisher, Strand.

Having accompanied the accomplished comedian to the goal of his ambition—the beau-ideal of a theatre-royal—I shall now take leave of Richard Jones, and retrace my steps to that city celebrated for its wit and orators, and say something respecting myself. It may appear trifling to others, but it was highly important to the author of this work, the matter I am going to touch upon, as it determined my destiny through life; it was my *début* at the Crow Street Theatre, 1807, at the age of thirteen, in Monk Lewis's grand romantic drama of 'Rugantino, or the Bravo of Venice.' Certainly the character altogether was of the most trivial quality; it was one of the sprites in the mask, and was of a pantomimic nature. However, it had its charms, as it gave the *entrée* of the theatre.

The mysteries of my business were now abandoned for the mysteries of the stage; and, like many others, I selected that calling which was more agreeable than hard work at the bench. Piano-making was not my forte, as I was much happier in suiting the action to the word than arranging the action to the instrument—so cele-

brated for its construction by my honoured parent.

'Rugantino' made a decided hit in Dublin, and proved a great attraction. This drama was not only gorgeous in its decorations, but, unlike several of its class, was well written. The original work from which it was taken, 'Abellino,' has been published in a volume with the Right Honourable Horace Walpole's 'Castle of Otranto.' Those that read and are not swayed by title may, at a small cost, find out the great difference between the abused Lewis's writing and that of the Earl of Orford.

The original Rugantino and Rosabella—Henry Johnston and wife, from Covent Garden—were engaged in Dublin; and such was the impression they made, that crowds followed them as they walked through Dame Street and other portions of the city.

The following sketch of this splendid and original actor may be interesting to the reader: Henry Johnston was born in Edinburgh, and had for his godfather the celebrated Lord Erskine, who took charge of his education; after whom he was called Henry Erskine Johnston. At this period the tragedy of 'Douglas' was very popular; and as Johnston had decided on making the stage his profession, he selected Young Norval as his

maiden attempt in his native city. His youthful appearance, being scarcely eighteen, graceful form, and handsome expressive countenance, won for him the universal approbation of his countrymen. Previous to this the noble shepherd was dressed in the trews and Scotch jacket; but when Johnston appeared in full Highland costume, in kilt, breast-plate, shield, claymore, and bonnet, the whole house rose, and such a reception was never witnessed within the walls of a provincial theatre before. The reverend author, Mr. Home,* was present; and at the conclusion of the tragedy publicly pronounced Johnston the beau-ideal of his conception. There can be no doubt of this, as all who have attempted this beautifully-drawn character have egregiously failed in producing the effects which Johnston brought forth. Modern Athens was not permitted long to retain this splendid actor. Johnston was engaged at Covent Garden, and made his first appearance in London in *Young Norval*, 1794, and at once became the greatest favourite in the theatre.

Melodrama was unknown at this period. Holcroft was so struck by the elegant and original

* The Rev. Mr. Home was dismissed from the Scotch Church for writing the best tragedy since the days of Otway. So disgusted was George III. with this treatment, that he settled 800*l.* a-year on the highly-gifted author.

style of Johnston's acting, that he arranged and planned the first melodrama ever performed in London for him—'The Tale of Mystery;' the part of Count Romaldi, Johnston made entirely his own.

A pantomime was produced at Covent Garden founded on the navigator La Pérouse; in which Johnston sustained the hero with great *éclat*.

In 1803 the Kemble family left Drury Lane, and became part managers with Harris of Covent Garden.

The tragedy of 'Douglas' was performed with the following cast: Glenalvon, George Cooke; Lord Randolph, Murray; Young Norval, H. Johnston; Old Norval, John Kemble; and Lady Randolph, Mrs. Siddons. Even in the midst of such overpowering talent, Johnston stood out as bold as any of the performers named. Never were the characters so ably filled before. Mrs. Crawford threw all actresses into the shade when she performed in this beautiful tragedy.

It is a notorious fact that *acting* managers, or those that sway the destinies of theatres, become alarmed when any performer makes too great an impression; and although they may shrink from giving notice of dismissal, yet they resort to other means—not the most praiseworthy, such as allotting to the popular actor rôles likely to degrade him not only in public estimation, but in his own.

This was the case with Henry Johnston at Covent Garden in 1806. Finding his acknowledged talent slighted by the management, he, like Handel, sought the Irish shores, and in its capital was hailed with enthusiasm. Here, in a city surrounded by mountains, waterfalls, and a bay second only to Naples, he passed the happiest years of his life. Here he might have remained all his days in his suburban villa of Rathmines, if a fatal ambition had not seized him, which urged him to mount one step higher and reach the highest pinnacle of the histrionic power, viz. the sway of the metropolitan theatre of Ireland. Here Johnston made a false calculation, in opposing a man that had in his grasp the sinews of war—money. Besides this great desideratum, the manager of the Theatre Royal, Crow Street, held the patent, and of course restricted all others from the performance of the legitimate drama. This was a prodigious bar against all success in a city where a pure taste for Shakespeare still exists, in despite of all the glare and show and noise of melodrama. Notwithstanding, Johnston considered his name and ability sufficient to enter the lists against a man of long standing and of the highest respectability.

The Amphitheatre in Peter Street was quickly transformed into a handsome minor theatre, and a host of melodramatic actors, pantomimists, dan-

cers, horse-riders, clowns, harlequins, and pantaloons were engaged; and the circus was opened in 1810, under the name of the Royal Hibernian Theatre.

A grand ballet was produced, in which Monsieur and Madame Des Hayes, from the Opera, Paris, appeared, and D'Egville's pupils; Noble, Miss Smith (afterwards Mrs. Oscar Byrne), and Miss Luppino. After this grand affair, Theodore Hook's melodrama of 'Tekeli' was performed. H. Johnston was the hero; Maurice, T. P. Cooke; Bras de Fer, John Byrne; Isidore (the simpleton), James Wallack; Conrad (the miller), Curtis; Christine, Mrs. Cresswell; and Alexina, Mrs. Eachus. With the exception of Johnston himself, all the performers absolutely failed to realise the characters with that vividness which was portrayed at the Crow Street Theatre by N. Jones, Johnson, Henry Weston, E. Williams, Mrs. Stewart, and Miss Walstein.

However, all met with an enthusiastic reception; and a naval song the first night, 'Bound prentice to a waterman,' by W. Miller, produced quite a *furor*. This beau-ideal of a British tar, known at the Surrey as Bill Miller, was exactly the thing itself. There was nothing sentimental about him; he appeared on the stage just such a tar as would fight his way in battle through a

host of enemies. He was, in fact, every inch a sailor.

In those days T. P. Cooke was engaged for the Clown in the pantomime, and James Wallack for low comedy. To meet this opposition, Jones engaged the greatest vocalist of the age, Braham. This was Braham's first appearance in Ireland; and a more powerful attraction could not have been selected, as Dublin was the most musical city in Great Britain.

This is no exaggeration : a city must be termed musical that has encored the overtures to 'Guy Mannering' and 'Der Freischütz,' and made Braham, in 1817, sing 'Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled' *three* times nightly.

Signor Belzoni paid a visit to Dublin in 1810 as the Patagonian Samson. I have witnessed his performance at the Royal Hibernian Theatre, Peter Street. This extraordinary individual carried fourteen men, and went through other feats of strength. Belzoni was the first that introduced the Grecian Statues, and the 'Ghost,'—that trick of the magic-lantern which excited the public so much lately.

Belzoni began to tire of the mountebank life he was engaged in, and determined to pursue one that would hand down his name to posterity as the greatest man that ever explored the buried wonders

of Egypt. He proceeded in 1817 to the land of the Pharaohs, and worked among the Arabs in the ruins of Thebes, where the excavated wonders of the great city of the ancient world will place Belzoni's name as the first of Egyptian travellers.

Belzoni was by nature well fitted to explore a pyramid and work with the children of the Desert. He stood nearly eight feet in height, and his calibre was in proportion. He was a Roman by birth, and received a liberal education, particularly in the arts and sciences; but the invasion of the States in 1796 by the French having destroyed his family and their possessions, he was compelled to enter on a course of life repugnant to his feelings. The rage for travel led him into Africa, where he perished, in 1823, between Timbuctoc and Houssa.

The Royal Hibernian Theatre turned out a failure. Johnston, by his license, was restricted to melodrama, pantomime, ballet, and horse-riding; and in time the intellectual portion of the community grew tired of a theatre where the immortal bard was invisible; consequently the finances became deranged, and when that is the case the company soon becomes careless and demoralised; and in the end Johnston retired, in the shades of evening, from the city that idolised him, never to see it more.

By this false step he sacrificed popularity and all his hopes of future comfort. He returned to his native country, Scotland, and entered on the management of the Glasgow and Greenock theatres; but, alas, he was doomed here to misfortune and disappointment—in fact, as a manager he was fated never to succeed.

There is no accounting for the fact that a splendid actor generally fails when he assumes managerial sway. Such men do not attend to the trifling details of a theatre, and those very small matters are as necessary to be looked after as the great ones. The engraving of Johnston as young Norval, still extant, gives some idea of his expressive features. His voice was of a beautiful quality, and for youthful characters never surpassed; nor was he confined in his talent, for he had equal abilities for comedy, as shown in 'The Three Singles,' 'Young Sadboy,' Walter in 'The Children in the Wood,' Felix in 'The Hunter of the Alps,' and Rover in 'Wild Oats,' while at Covent Garden his serious pantomime characters were very popular, such as Don Juan, Henry in 'The Deserter,' and La Pérouse. Yet, after all his triumphs in London and Dublin, in his aged days he became the manager of a few small theatres in Cumberland.

They say there is only one step from the sublime to the ridiculous, and here it was exemplified.

CHAPTER II.

Reminiscences of Dublin continued—Jack Johnstone—His successful career as a delineator of Irish Character—Gives his daughter 20,000*l.* on her marriage with James Wallack—Robert William Elliston—Holman and Elliston compared—Conway—Mrs. Jordan's début in Dublin—Death of an Actor on the Stage—Williams—First appearance of Thomas Phillipps the Vocalist—Salaries fifty years ago—Miss Smith (Mrs. Bartley) as Lady Macbeth—Mrs. Stewart and Mrs. Liston—The Misses Dykes—Tom Cooke and the Orchestra of the Dublin Theatre—Cooke's success as a Vocalist—Amateur theatricals at Kilkenny, with Moore the Poet, and Sir Wm. Beecher, Miss O'Neill's husband, in the cast—Remarkable marriages of Actresses—How to cure a stage-struck youth—Horsewhipping Lord Randolph.

DUBLIN, in former days, was considered an El Dorado for the London stars, where they reaped a harvest that enabled them to add to the store they were laying by for the winter of life.

Of all the popular men of London, Jack Johnstone was more favoured and courted than any other, not only on account of his nationality, but in consequence of his unapproachable talent in either the Irish gentleman or the peasant. His rich and delicious singing, and his agreeable and sociable

manners, gained the hearts of gentle and simple in his native city.

There have been many excellent actors in the *low* Irishman, but there has been only *one* comedian that could delineate the refined Irish gentleman, and enter into the genuine unsophisticated humour of a son of the Emerald Isle with equal talent.

There is not much difficulty in creating laughter, like the clown in the ring, by uttering the usual number of jokes put into the mouth of the bogtrotter, or skipping about the stage as the Irish valet, displaying all the vagaries of a merry-andrew; but the task of the Irish actor to realise the accomplished gentleman—such as Sir Lucius O'Trigger or Major O'Flaherty—is not so facile, as ease, deportment, and address are all indispensable in the embodiment of those two finished specimens of Irish character.

Jack Johnstone, then, may be named as the only actor that has ever appeared in any theatre capable of sustaining the high and low *rôle* of his native country with ability.

Truly it may be said, Dennis Brulgruddery, Teague, and Paddy O'Rafferty died with him; and the melodies of 'Savourneen Deelish,' sung so deliciously, have never produced such effect in the mouth of any other vocalist.

Johnstone's figure was above the middle size,

and well-formed; his face was handsome, and indicative of the sparkling humour inherent in him—in fact, he was Kilkenny itself.

This admirable actor was the son of a distinguished retired officer in the county of Wicklow, and was educated for the army; but his vocal ability induced him to attempt a less arduous profession, and he made his *debut* at the Crow Street Theatre in Captain Macheath with complete success. At the end of the season he appeared at Covent Garden, and maintained a high reputation as a singer till Incledon burst on the public, and he was obliged to turn his attention to a line of business rare at that period—Irish character parts.

Johnstone was the original Inkle in Colman's opera of 'Inkle and Yarico,' and Patrick in O'Keeffe's beautiful operatic farce of 'The Poor Soldier'—a piece that may be called "a shower of melodies."

This comedian resided in Covent Garden Market during his metropolitan career of forty-one years, and always said "he loved the locality, as the cabbages gave the morning air a sweet and wholesome odour."

James Wallack was united to Johnstone's daughter, and on the wedding-day received 20,000*l.* So vast a sum created some astonishment as to how it could have been scraped toge-

ther; but when it is remembered that Johnstone was never known to give any thing away, the wonder ceases.

Sometimes the Dublin people disputed the judgment of those of London. But when such actors appeared in the Irish metropolis as John Kemble, George Cooke, Lewis, Munden, Dowton, Fawcett, Bannister, and Emery, of course there was only one opinion; but there was not one opinion on Elliston, when he paid a visit to Dublin and made his *début* in Hamlet.

Although Robert William Elliston acted Hamlet, Macbeth, and Richard, in London, yet his reputation was not gained by such characters. He had C. Young, Kemble, and G. Cooke to contend against. It was his comedy that made him—his *Rover* and *Vapid* took the town; and when an actor obtains popularity, he considers he may do what he likes for his own amusement. But this is a dangerous experiment to try among strangers, particularly with a people that possessed such a resident actor as George Holman—a man that, in 1787, was the *Romeo*, *Hamlet*, *Alexander*, and *Jaffier* of the *Covent Garden*.

On the evening of Elliston's first appearance in Dublin, an elegant and brilliant audience was assembled; but it was soon discovered that he was every way inferior to Holman; and the curtain

dropped amidst disappointment and murmurs, not loud but deep. However, lost laurels were pulled up on his second appearance, in *Rover*.

After Lewis, Elliston was declared free from all competition in this splendidly-drawn character. His third appearance was in a piece called 'The Three Singles,' in which he represented three parts—a fop, a staid sober gentleman, and a simpleton.

There was a divided opinion among the editors in Dublin in regard to Elliston and Melvin in the same characters. Melvin was the original in the Irish capital, and numbers considered he surpassed Elliston in two of the *rôles*—the fop and simpleton.

Elliston was ill adapted for tragedy. Although possessing a highly intelligent face, his limbs were not Apollo-shaped; nor could he boast the height and majesty of Holman.

This accomplished actor was quite original, and could bid defiance to either Cooke or Kemble in a certain number of characters. His voice was of a superior quality, of great compass, and capable of any intonation; his face noble, and his height about five feet eleven.

All the actors of that day, both in the street and on the stage, Holman surpassed in majestic bearing and deportment.

The London critics acknowledged "his Lord Lowly, in 'The Provoked Husband,' the perfection of the nobleman of the days of Chesterfield." He was quite unlike an actor in the dignified lord, and was the thing itself. Then his Felix, in 'The Vonder,' Benedict, Petruchio,* Avanza, Glenalton, Alexander, and De Valmont, were never surpassed by any since his decease.

Count de Valmont was the last part which Holman represented in Dublin: this was in 1810.

William Diamond's interesting and well-written drama, 'The Foundling of the Forest,' had first been performed in London, and met with universal applause. The same success attended its production in Dublin. The cast of characters was as follows:

<i>De Valmont</i>	.	.	Holman.
<i>Florian</i>	.	.	Percy Farren.
<i>Longueville</i>	.	.	Younger.
<i>Bertrand</i>	.	.	Nicholas Jones.
<i>L'Eclair</i>	.	.	E. Williams.
<i>Gaspard</i>	.	.	Wm. Farren.
<i>Sanguins</i>	.	.	Carroll.
<i>Lonvir</i>	.	.	King.

* It is extraordinary that this Italian name 'Petruchio' always pronounced wrong in England. The *ch* in Italian is hard, in French soft. The proper way to pronounce it is *pe-tru-ke-o*. I had to wend my way as far as Naples to find it out.

<i>Eugenie</i>	.	.	.	Miss Smith (afterwards Mrs. Bartley).
<i>Rosabelle</i>	.	.	.	Mrs. Steward.
<i>Monica</i>	.	.	.	Mrs. Williams.

The characters in this sterling drama were, as a whole, as well sustained in Dublin as they were at the Haymarket.

Holman appeared as the Count six nights, and then took his departure for America, where he ended his days.

Many De Valmonts I have witnessed in fifty-four years, but have never seen the equal of this accomplished English actor.

Holman did not leave the Irish capital in good odour: he was guilty of something that looked disgraceful or disgraceful in the city's eye; and as the Irish are rather fastidious in respect to the conduct of those who hold prominent positions among them, they give utterance to their feelings, even in a public assembly, that is not pleasant to those that make a breach in their manners. Yet in their social habits they hold out the hand to the stranger, no matter what land may claim him, if he possess talent. It does not signify whether long or short of stature, fat or lean, they cheer and fan his rising talent, and are loth to part with the favourite that they have reared and encouraged.

To replace such an actor as Holman was no

easy matter. Neither Ireland or Scotland had his equal; and only one provincial town in England could send forth a substitute, and that was Birmingham. The tragedian, that arrived in Dublin to fill so important a position, was the ill-fated Conway.

The favourite who leaves a theatre devolves on his successor an onerous task, even if possessed of equal talent. It is hard to combat prejudices long cherished, and the new actor is generally looked at as an intruder, and not wanted.

Conway made his *début* in Hamlet, and at once established himself a favourite. His appearance certainly created surprise, and well it might, for he was nearly six feet three—the tallest man on the stage; but then the public soon discovered that he did not copy any of the great men in London, and stood on his own merit, without borrowing from Kemble.

Dean Swift has said, “There is little difference between tweedle-dum and tweedle-dee.” If such was the Dean’s opinion in a musical sense, so is it in a dramatic. The fate of an actor very often depends on the turn of a feather in regard to elevation: there is but one step from the sublime to the ridiculous, and *vice versa*.

Yet some of our novel-writers—Washington Irving, that brilliant literary character—has held

the poor country actor up to scorn; and another novelist—Marryatt—speaks of him as a “strolling vagabond.” The term vagabond only means strolling or wandering, and is no ways derogatory. So “strolling player” cannot be termed absolutely a stigma on the profession. But when an eminent writer—Boaden—in his *Life of Mrs. Jordan*, calls a body of actors “raff,” then indeed it sounds any thing but complimentary or respectful.

Boaden speaks of Mrs. Jordan’s visit to Dublin in 1809, and goes on to say: “Her efforts were marred by the raff which composed the company, that were more *au fait* in potting than in the business of the stage.”

Having been a juvenile actor at the period, I am capable of stating some particulars of what really did occur in the Irish capital, while Mr. Boaden was in London, and could know very little about it. The comedy of ‘*The Inconstant*’ was the piece selected for the great actress’s *début*, in which she represented Bizarras; Mirabel was allotted to a young actor, Dwyer, who had never played the part. In consequence of short notice, and coming after such a comedian as Talbot, his powers failed him when before the public, and an *exposé* occurred that rather interfered with the action of the comedy. That portion of the piece where Mirabel reads a page of Virgil in the origi-

nal gained the new actor well-merited applause; but the scenes with Mrs. Jordan were any thing but smooth and easy.

The papers next day attacked Dwyer. This brought some employment to the gentlemen of the long robe, and he obtained 300*l.* damages.

There was a divided opinion in respect to Mrs. Jordan and Mrs. Edwin in the city. The latter actress had just left; and as she was directly in Mrs. Jordan's style, young too and beautiful, while the great woman was in the sear and yellow leaf, of course the more juvenile portion of the community were for Mrs. Edwin. Certainly in such parts as *Violante*, *Widow Cheerly*, *Lady Teazle*, *Lady Townly*, *Juliana*, *Lydia Languish*, Mrs. Edwin was second only to Mrs. Jordan; and the impression her acting made on the hearts of the Irish was not easily forgotten. Even such women as Mrs. Bartley and Miss O'Neill did not eclipse her. A portion of the "*raff*"—Boaden's term for the Dublin actors—I have already touched upon: Talbot, Richard Jones, Henry Johnston, and Holman.

Trinity College contributed three of her students in order to fill the ranks of the Crow Street Theatre: Simpson, Putnam, and Charles Connor.

Simpson crossed the Atlantic in 1810, and became a popular actor in New York, and manager

of the Park Theatre. Putnam retired from the stage on his appointment as Elocution Master in the College of Aberdeen; and Charles Connor filled the first *rôle* of Irishmen at Covent Garden in 1826, when Tyrone Power was in a secondary position.

The three comedians of the theatre—Fullam, E. Williams and Johnson—were not every-day kind of men. Some idea may be formed of them in 1810; for when William Farren became a member of the Crow Street Theatre, they were not eclipsed, and stood out in just as bold relief as before the arrival of this accomplished actor. Fullam was the comic old man of the theatre—nature had designed him in figure and face for such a *rôle*; for even when a young man he was considered an old one.

There are many men in life whose faces resemble those on the knocker of doors. Such a face Fullam had: it required no making up—nature had arranged that; while his figure was neat and well formed for the gentleman of the old school. Fullam was a member of a respectable Irish family, and had received a medical education; but the charms of the stage induced him, like others, to throw physic to the dogs, and enter on a calling for which he was so admirably fitted.

It is a prodigious advantage to the comedian

to have received a liberal education, and to be used to good society in early life. It is easy to descend to the *canaille*, but very difficult to assume with ease the manners and deportment of the gentleman. The early training of Liston, Mathews, and William Farren gave a marked superiority to those comedians over their compeers.

Fullam realised the style of the celebrated Quick in his acting, and excelled in Justice Woodcock, Silky, Varland, Itim, Old Harry, Lockit, Gregory Gubbins, Polonius, Sir Antony Absolute; and in the singing old man in the operas—such as Don Scipio, in 'The Castle of Andalusia;' Don Jerome, in 'The Duenna;' Baron of Oakland, in 'The Haunted Tower;' and Sir John Bull, in 'Fontainebleau;' indeed he surpassed all the actors on the stage; and this in consequence of possessing vocal power and understanding music.

This gifted and respected actor lived to a great age, and at last died in harness at eighty.

In 1826, while performing Don Christophel in Bishop's opera of 'Brother and Sister,' he received a tremendous encore for the song of 'Nong tong pau;' and just as he had concluded it a second time, with all the vigour and richness of his best days, on reaching the wing he fell, never to rise again in life.

I do not hold with men continuing on the stage

in the downhill of life, if they have the means of subsisting; and Fullam was quite independent. After a long life of toil and labour in his arduous vocation, he ought to have retired, and prepared for that bourne from whence there is no return. Never was actor more honoured in death than Fullam; 20,000 followed his remains. Ireland's Duke, his Grace of Leinster, was one of the pall-bearers.

The second old man of the Dublin Theatre, Edward Williams, was an Englishman of varied talent. He was admired for his style of rendering the hearty and sentimental old men, and was the original in the Irish capital in Caleb Quotem, Mingle, the King in 'Bombastes,' Job Thornbury, Sir Mark Chase, and Lord Grizzle.

No matter whether in the fine old English gentleman, the eccentric Caleb Quotem, the heart-broken brazier Job, or the guilty Hubert; even by the side of such a king as the classic Kemble, this respectable son of the mimic art, displayed genius and versatile talent not always found in the same individual.

Williams, like Fullam, possessed vocal power; and those two esteemed actors worked and laboured in the same vineyard, in good fellowship, for the best portion of their career, and in the end, directed that

their mortal remains should rest among the people who loved them so well.

Williams was noticed by Crofton Croker in the 'Familiar Epistles,' in respect to his peculiar action in tragedy; first laying his hand on his heart, then raising it to heaven, and afterwards pointing to his toe.

It was something like Foote, called "Fat Foote," in his tragedy, who always delivered his soliloquies with his fore-finger opposite to his nose, and kept looking at it till the end of the discourse.

Foote was a member of the Dublin Theatre some time, and in cold declamatory characters, such as the Ghost in Hamlet, was excellent; but the moment he became excited, he set the audience in a roar. This occurred so often, that Foote began to lose all faith in his tragic powers, and accordingly he applied to the manager of Drury Lane for an engagement as the comic old man. He obtained this position; and both at Drury Lane and the Haymarket, in 1824, Foote figured successfully in comedy.

Charles Connor, already mentioned, was the juvenile tragedian in Dublin. At Covent Garden it was discovered he had mistaken his fort, so he became the dashing rollicking Irish comedian; hence the difficulty of defining what is really comic or *vice versâ*.

Johnson, the third comedian of Dublin, was called "Yorkshire Johnson," although he was a Londoner, and had never set foot in the great northern county. However, as the Irish are not very critical in regard to dialect, so there is talent, Johnson passed very well for a Yorkshire actor.

The death of the celebrated Jemmy Stewart, the Billy O'Rourke, gave an opening to Johnson; and he answered public expectation in whatever he undertook. He had a neat dapper figure, not too short; while a pleasing, expressive face was much in his favour. The great range of characters which he assumed obliged him at times to personate an ugly rôle, and at other times a handsome youth. It is certainly possible to render a face forbidding, but to admire where nature has not been bountiful is quite out of the question.

The fine sterling operas with pure English melodies were then the rage; operas in which the compositions of Arne, Shield, Dibdin, and Storace, were warbled. It was in these operas that Johnson stood forward in bold relief. His characters were Leopold, in 'The Siege of Belgrade;' William, in 'The Haunted Tower;' Isaac Mendoza; Hodge, in 'Love in a Village;' Jemmy Jumps, in 'The Farmer;' Pedrillo, in 'The Castle of Andalusia;' Lingo, in 'The Agreeable Surprise;' Mungo, in 'The Padlock;' and Little John, in 'Robin Hood.'

Then in comedy, his Toney Lumpkin, Squire Richard, in 'The Provoked Husband;' Acres, Clod in 'The Young Quaker;' and Zekiel Homespun, in 'The Heir-at-Law,' were of such excellence that for many years I have not seen his equal; even Liston's attempt at Oliver Goldsmith's Country Squire was much beneath Johnson's.

In 1816, when I first visited a London theatre, I was much surprised to find at Covent Garden Shacabac, in 'Blue Beard,' a failure, in comparison to the Dublin comedian's portraiture; and at Old Drury Little Knight's Little John could not be named in the same day with Little Johnson's.

Yet this popular actor had many trials to struggle with, many rivals to contend against, namely, Jemmy Stewart, Edwin, and H. Weston.

This latter comedian, had he remained in the Irish capital in Yorkshire characters, would have eclipsed Johnson altogether. Weston's Tyke came the nearest to the great original Emery of any man on the stage. Not that Johnson was deficient in quiet force, but he was ill-adapted for ruffianly characters; yet his Giles, in 'The Miller's Maid,' was a powerful piece of acting.

A London actor was engaged for a number of nights, and he was announced to open in Giles. When the curtain drew up, and the star made his appearance, a general demand was made for John-

son. The manager came forward and told the audience that Mr. Johnson was not advertised for the character. "No matter," says a gentleman in the gallery, "it is our will and pleasure that Johnson shall play the part." The manager and the London actor had to retire. Johnson dressed, and amidst thunders of applause rushed on the stage, and played the part with his usual energy.

There was another character which Johnson acted, and required great force—Walter, in 'The Children in the Wood.' It has never been my good fortune to witness the original Jack Ban-nister in this part; but I have seen Henry Johnson and Elliston in it, and both of those splendid actors were powerful and original; but in my opinion Johnson was equal to either of them in energy, and was certainly more natural.

I cannot quote an author like Crofton Croker in regard to Johnson's talent. I can only state the opinion of a splendid comedian, a dear friend, now no more, David Rees, the actor who made his *début* at the Haymarket in 1840 in Paul Pry, and took the audience by surprise. Rees was several seasons the Farren of the Dublin Theatre. It is very seldom that one comedian speaks well of another. During a conversation in 1831 in Dublin, Rees gave me his opinion respecting Johnson's acting, and declared "he was the finest that he ever

beheld out of London." "As a test of Johnson's talent," he observed, "a few nights ago, the Lord-Lieutenant commanded the comedy of 'The Rivals.' I was Sir Antony; Sir Lucius, Tyrone Power; and Acres, Keeley. Of course, there was a brilliant and crowded house, and the comedy went off tremendously." Although Johnson sustained a secondary part, being to oblige, yet he stood as forward as those who had the best of the characters. Without a question, he was as clever as any of them, although he had never been in a London theatre. It is no rule, because a man is unknown to the metropolis, that he cannot have first-rate talent. Why, it was by the merest chance that Edmund Kean was dragged out of obscurity in the rural shades; and many a brilliant flower has been doomed to wither in a sterile soil, that if transplanted to a more fertile spot would have bloomed.

Johnson was contented with his lot, and had seen a great deal during his long sojourn of nearly forty years in the Irish metropolis. He had seen actors enticed away to London with tempting baits, who afterwards would have been delighted to return to their old quarters in a city abounding in beauty and hospitality. How often have these men, after a fair trial in their own land, dropped down to decay and ruin, who if blessed with foresight might have remained, like Fullam, Williams, and Johnson, with

ease and comfort among a people who never desert their favourites in the winter of life.

The ill-fated Conway was one that permitted himself to be decoyed into the lion's den in Covent Garden, where he was annihilated and crushed; but more of him anon.

There was located in the Crow Street Theatre a vocalist, acknowledged to be the only singer that could walk the stage like a gentleman. This was Thomas Phillipps.

Phillipps made his *début* in Dublin about 1800, and soon convinced the public that he could act as well as sing. Colman's comic opera, 'Love laughs at Locksmiths,' was produced with great *éclat*—Phillipps sustaining Elliston's part, Captain Bel-dare; Risk, Jemmy Stewart; the two old men, Vigil and Totterton, Williams and Fullam; and Solomon Lob, Johnson. Any character in the military style Phillipps looked to the life; in fact, he was often taken for an officer as he rode a high horse through the town with his military spurs and braided frock-coat. Phillipps left Dublin in 1809, and made his *début* at the Lyceum Theatre, London, with complete success.

In 1810, Lewis's romantic operatic drama, 'One o'Clock, or the Knight and the Wood Demon,' was produced with great splendour, the music by M. P. King. The Knight was performed by Phillipps.

His acting and singing in this part paved his way to Drury Lane; but finding a more extended range lay before him in the States, he crossed the Atlantic, and created such a *furore* in New York, that the engagements that poured in could not be accepted. After his career in the New World, he returned to the Old, and began a course of lectures on singing at the Hanover-square Rooms which attracted the *élite* of society.

These lectures were both pleasing and instructive, for they were illustrated by female vocalists of scientific talent. But in the midst of this accomplished singer's new avocation he fell a victim to the new but ill-arranged mode of conveyance, the railway, and was crushed to death near London.

Phillipps was noted for his pure taste and science, and if his voice had been of superior quality in strength, he would have stood the equal of Braham. In his juvenile days he was a *second* Brummell; but as years increased on him, he wisely laid by his superfluous cash, instead of wasting it, like that unfortunate Beau, on a parcel of tailors.

I have drawn a sketch of the principal actors in the Dublin Theatre at the period of Mrs. Jordan's visit, merely to prove the sort of characters which constituted the pith and marrow of the establishment; and if by any chance a performer degraded himself by an act of drunkenness, a discharge fol-

lowed. Frederick Jones was very particular in the reputation of his company that they should sustain the rank of gentlemen; and in order to carry out this idea, he afforded them better salaries than generally fell to the share of actors in the provinces in England. The salaries were 3*l.*, 4*l.*, 5*l.*, and 10*l.* a-week; and the benefit charges were only fifty guineas for a theatre that held 540*l.*: 4*l.* were the maximum in Liverpool. The female portion of the staff of the theatre had at its head an actress second only to Mrs. Siddons, and this was Miss Smith, afterwards Mrs. Bartley. Her Lady Macbeth, Constance, and Queen Katharine, were powerful embodiments, and I question if they have ever since been so finely portrayed. Miss Smith was formed by nature for the higher walk of her profession. She had a noble and expressive face, full, strong, and melodious voice, capable of any intonation, and an original conception of her author; but having such an actress as Siddons to contend with, of course she had every disadvantage in her way in gaining metropolitan fame.

After a brief engagement at Covent Garden in 1807, she appeared in Dublin, and became the leading actress of the theatre.

In 1811, when Mrs. Siddons retired from the stage, Miss Smith considered there was a fair field open for her. Here she calculated without her

host; for no sooner was she fairly installed in the capital, than another Siddons burst on the public, and this splendid actress, now in the sear and yellow leaf, was thrown into the shade. "A vain bubble is fame."

Collins's unequalled 'Ode on the Passions' Miss Smith delivered in a style that defied all competition; and even Talbot, who had gained such renown in the Irish metropolis in the Ode, frankly acknowledged Miss Smith's superiority.

In 1809, Thomas Moore, ever a welcome guest in the green-room of the Crow Street Theatre, was so charmed with Miss Smith in her delivery of the Ode, that he wrote for her a 'Melologue upon National Music,' which was spoken by her on her benefit night (1809); and this I perfectly remember.

Moore in his preface to this poem says: "This work was written in haste to serve the purpose of a benefit, and it very rarely happens that poetry which costs but little labour to the writer is productive of much pleasure to the reader; that whatever merit it had in the recital was produced by the great abilities of the speaker, Miss Smith."

Here is the quintessence of modesty, although in an Irishman; but I consider that if any writer in the present day could equal the 'Melologue,' it would be something worthy of note.

As a proof of what I assert, I shall lay the hastily-written poem before my readers:

MELOLOGUE UPON NATIONAL MUSIC.

Opening Music.

"There breathes the language known and felt,
Far as the pure air spreads its living zone;
Wherever rage can rouse, or pity melt,
Thy language of the soul is felt and known.
From those meridian plains
Where oft of old, on some high tower,
The soft Peruvian poured his midnight strain,
And called his distant love with such sweet power
That when she heard the lonely lay,
Not worlds could keep her from his arms away,
To the bleak climes of polar night,
Where beneath a sunless sky
The Lapland lover bids his reindeer fly,
And sings along the lengthening waste of snow
As blithe as if the blessed light
Of vernal Phœbus burn'd upon his brow.
Oh, Music! thy celestial claim
Is still resistless—still the same;
And faithful as the mighty sea
To the pale star that o'er its realms presides;
The spell-bound tides
Of human passion rise and fall for thee.

Greek Air.

List! 'tis a Grecian maid that sings,
While from Iliuss' silvery springs
She draws the cool lymph in her graceful urn;
And by her side, in Music's charm dissolving,
Some patriot youth the glorious past revolving,
Dreams of bright days that never can return—

When Athens nursed her olive-bough
With hands by tyrant's power unchained;
And braided for the Muses' brow
A wreath by tyrant's touch unstained;
When heroes trod each classic field,
Where valiant feet now faintly falter;
When every arm was freedom's shield,
And every heart was freedom's altar.

[Flourish of trumpets.]

Hark! 'tis the sound that charms
The war-steed's wakening ears.
Oh! many a mother folds her arms
Round her boy-soldier when that call she hears;
And though her fond heart sink with fears,
Is proud to feel his young pulse bound
With valour's fervour at the trumpet's sound.
 See, from his native hills afar
 The bold Helvetian flies to war,
 Careless for what, for whom he fights,
 For slave or despot, wrongs or rights—
 A conqueror oft, a hero never,
 Yet lavish of his life-blood still,
 As if 'twere like his mountain rill
 That gush'd for ever.
Oh, Music! here, even here,
Amid this thoughtless wild career,
The soul-felt charm asserts its wondrous power.
There is an air which oft among the rocks
Of his own loved land at evening hour
Is heard, when shepherds homeward pipe their flocks.
Oh! every note of it would thrill his mind
With tenderest thoughts—would bring around his knees
The rosy children whom he left behind,
 And fill each little angel eye

With sparkling tears, that ask him why
He wander'd from his hut for scenes like these !
Vain, vain is then the trumpet's brazen roar—
Sweet notes of home, of love, are all he hears ;
And the stern eyes that look'd for blood before,
Now melting mournful, lose themselves in tears.

Swiss Air.

But wake the trumpet's blast again,
And rouse the ranks of warrior men.
Oh, War ! when truth thy arm employs,
And freedom's spirit guides the labouring storm,
'Tis then thy vengeance takes a hallow'd form,
And, like Heaven's lightning, *sacredly* destroys.
Nor, Music, through thy breathing sphere
Lives there a sound more grateful to the ear
Of *Him* who made all harmony
Than the blest sound of fetters breaking,
And the first hymn that man awaking
From slavery's slumber, breathes to liberty.

A Spanish Air.

Hark ! from Spain—indignant Spain—
Bursts the bold enthusiast's strain,
Like morning's music on the air ;
And seems in every note to swear
By Saragossa's ruined streets,
By brave Gerona's deathful story,
That while one Spaniard's life-blood beats
That blood shall stain the conqueror's glory.
But ah ! if vain the patriot's zeal,
What song shall then in sadness tell
Of wither'd pride—of prospects shaded—
Of buried hopes remember'd well—
Of ardour quench'd and honour faded ?
What Muse shall mourn the breathless brave,

In sweetest dirge at memory's shrine?
What harp shall sigh o'er Freedom's grave?
Oh! Erin, mavourneen—'twill be thine!"

Air—'The Harp of Tara.'

Miss Smith bid adieu to Dublin in 1811, and made her appearance the same year at Drury Lane. Here in this establishment she met her first love, George Bartley, and became his second wife.

In 1817, finding that she, like all other actresses, was thrown into the shade by Miss O'Neill's overpowering talent, she set sail with her husband for the United States. After a brief sojourn in the New World, she returned to England and left the stage.

Mrs. Bartley was the daughter of Irish parents, and lost her father at a tender age. Her mother married a second time, and her daughter assumed the name of her stepfather, as it was not a common one, "Smith;" her own was of true Milesian origin, and not adapted for the stage or English lips, "O'Shaughnessy." Mr. and Mrs. Bartley were especial favourites at Court; and her Majesty, ere she assumed sovereign power, was instructed in elocution by this accomplished lady, who may be quoted as one of the ornaments of her sex and the stage.

During Miss Smith's engagement in Dublin, she found a powerful rival in Miss Walstein, par-

ticularly in comedy. This lady's education was of the first order, and she possessed every accomplishment necessary for her profession. Those that have witnessed her dignified style and exquisite singing, her Ophelia, and the thrilling effects of her Blanche in the 'Lady of the Lake,' can never forget her.

While these two popular and well-experienced women were delighting the capital of Ireland, there was a juvenile actress in the rural districts going through her probationary career, who produced in London a sensation perfectly unexampled in the annals of the drama, and this was Miss O'Neill.

It was not customary for aspirants to receive lessons in acting in those days, being considered an art that could not be taught except within the body of a theatre, perfect and regular. But singing demands the master, and it is a matter of impossibility to form the vocalist without the instructor.

Mrs. Crouch, the principal singer of Drury Lane, had several pupils. Two I shall name, as they had arrived at eminence in London and Dublin—Miss Griffiths and Miss Tyrer. One married the great comedian of the Irish metropolis, Stewart; and the other the great comedian of the English metropolis, Liston.

Those two vocalists and actresses were of different calibre; one, Mrs. Stewart, was the beau ideal of Ariel; and Mrs. Liston, the beau ideal of Queen

Dollabella, in the burlesque of 'Tom Thumb;' in fact, her abilities and accomplishments were well known to a London audience; while those of her fellow-pupil, Mrs. Stewart, were so appreciated by the Dublin public, that nearly half a century has not obliterated her from the memory of those who have witnessed her inimitable acting and singing in Ariel, Little Pickle, Beda, and Moggy M'Gillpin—characters so well adapted for her sylph-like form and sprightly style of acting.

It is very rare indeed that an actress can both dance and sing sufficient to satisfy a judicious audience. The performer just quoted possessed these qualities in an eminent degree; and although age began to appear in her latter years, yet she maintained her ascendancy over the hearts of those who had witnessed her more juvenile efforts.

There was one character, the papers noticed, she was rather out of character in attempting at the age of forty. This was the Spoiled Child, Little Pickle. The manager at length cast the character to a more juvenile actress. This encroachment on what she considered her vested rights Mrs. Stewart resented loudly among her circle of friends, complaining bitterly of the manager's conduct, and declaring "it was rather too bad after playing the Spoiled Child for twenty years with such *éclat*, to deprive me of it now."

Dancing was an especial favourite in Dublin, and the following accomplished and interesting ladies were truly graceful on the light fantastic toe: Miss Adamses, Miss Dennetts, and the Miss Dykes.

The eldest Miss Dyke was married to a young actor, Mr. Duff, afterwards popular in America as a tragedian. The second Miss Dyke became the wife of Ireland's great poet, Tom Moore; and the third was united to Wm. Murray, manager of the Edinburgh Theatre.

The author of the melodies undertook a journey to Modern Athens, to be present at the marriage of his sister-in-law; and while in Edinburgh, Sir Walter Scott was presented to his brother bard by a leading character. The manager, Murray, who was a man of business, proposed that the two poets, Scott and Moore, should attend the theatre on a certain evening; accordingly, the stage-box was fitted up, surmounted by the arms of Scotland and Ireland; and when the two great men made their *entrée* together, like Napoleon and Alexander at the grand opera 'Erfurt,' the whole of the audience rose up, amidst the most rapturous demonstrations of delight and exultation ever heard within the walls of a theatre.

The manager of the Dublin Theatre, Frederick Jones, not only possessed the keenest judgment in

dramatic talent, but he had what all managers should have, a musical ear. In testimony of this, his orchestra could boast of the following musicians: Thomas Cooke, leader; Thomas Willman, clarionet; Henry Willman, trumpet; Bond, bassoon; Mulligan, horn; Bartholomew Cooke, oboe; James Barton, principal second violin; Avery Cooke, piccolo; Redmond Cook, violoncello; Messrs Grey and Garret M'Donnell, double basses; and Nicholson, flute. To say any thing in praise of Nicholson I am sure is superfluous; his fame is well known as the greatest flautist that ever appeared in London. Some years after his training in the Irish metropolis, he entered the lists in London against Drouet, acknowledged the first flute in Europe, and gained the victory.

As Paganini stands the first on record as a violinist, so does Nicholson as a flautist; for no man ever produced such a tone on the instrument—it was, indeed, a magic flute. T. Willman, his brother-in-law, became known to a London public as the clarionet of the Opera-house, and master of the band of the Guards.

Henry Willman, on the trumpet, stood as high in reputation in Dublin as either of the great men named.

Trumpeting was not such an easy business in those days as it is in the present. There were no

keys; and the performer who could produce a brilliant tone, run rapid passages, and finish by a shake, was looked upon as a wonder. Such was Henry Willman, who was ever received with acclamations in his concertos.

In 1811 Willman introduced the Kent or key-bugle to the public for the first time. This instrument, that has led the way for all the keyed instruments that swell our brass bands, was the invention of a poor Irish musician, who sold his right to Logier for a few pounds, and thus enabled this foreigner to put 20,000*l.* in his pocket.

The leader of the orchestra was T. Cooke. In those days it was customary for the leader to play his fiddle, and, by the superiority of its tone, to keep the band together; in this particular Cooke held a prominent position.

The name of Tom Cooke, so long renowned at Old Drury as vocalist, leader, director, and composer, is not yet forgotten. This versatile musical genius commenced his career as a boy in the orchestra of the Dublin Theatre. Ere he reached manhood he was promoted to the rank of leader. 1803 brought him before the public as a composer; this was in consequence of the non-arrival of the *finale* to the first act of Colman's operatic farce of 'Love laughs at Locksmiths'—just produced at the Haymarket.

Having no electric telegraphs, steamboats, or railways in those times, London and Dublin occupied days in regard to communication. As the case was urgent, Tom Cooke undertook to furnish a *finale*; and when the original arrived, although the work of a veteran, Michael Kelly, yet the composition of the juvenile musician, Cooke, was declared the superior, and was ever afterwards retained as part and parcel of the opera.

That Cooke was appreciated by his townsmen, his benefit-nights fully testified. On those occasions he personated some comic character, and delighted their ears by the brilliancy of his touch in his concertos on the violin; indeed, he has played a concerto on eight instruments, but the papers said "that was for his own amusement; something like Liston's attempt at Romeo."

In 1812 Tom Cooke announced himself on his benefit-night for the Seraskier in Storace's opera of 'The Siege of Belgrade.' This attempt took the town by surprise; for although Braham, two years previous, created a *furor* in the character, Cooke, by his masterly science, electrified the audience at the falling of the curtain. That silly custom was not then in vogue of calling people to rise from the stern and firm gripe of death, to come and make them a bow; no—the call when made was for a repetition of the opera.

This experiment of Cooke in trying his vocal powers lost Dublin its leader and composer. The news of Cooke's success was not slow in reaching London, and the result was an engagement at the Lyceum, then under the management of Arnold. 'The Siege of Belgrade' was produced; and such was the impression he made in the Seraskier, that both national theatres contested in a court of law for the services of the Irish vocalist and musician.

Drury Lane gained the day, and Cooke went over to that establishment as vocalist, composer, and director of music. Not only in a musical sense was he celebrated, but as a wit and mimic; he was noted in the latter department, and his mock Italian trio, where he imitated a prima donna, the lover, and old man, was pronounced of the first order of burlesque.

At the period the ancient ballad of the 'Old English Gentleman' burst on the world, two publishers laid claim to the copyright, as authors of the accompaniment. The case was tried in the Court of King's Bench before Lord Denman, who acted as judge. Tom Cooke was subpoenaed as a witness for one of the parties, and Sir James Scarlett (father of the general) was retained as counsel.

In the course of the trial, Sir James elicited the following evidence from Cooke :

Sir James. Now, Mr. Cooke, you say the melodies are the same, but different?

Tom Cooke. I said the notes in the two copies were alike, but with a different accent.

Sir James. What is a musical accent?

Tom Cooke. When I explain any thing in music, I charge a guinea a lesson (*a loud laugh in court*).

Sir James, rather ruffled. Never mind your terms. I ask you what is a musical accent? Can you see it?

Tom Cooke. No.

Sir James. Can you feel it.

Tom Cooke. A musician can (*great laughter*).

Sir James, enraged. Now, sir, don't beat about the bush, but tell his lordship and the jury, who are supposed to know nothing about it, the meaning of what you call accent?

Tom Cooke. The accent in music is a stress laid on a particular note, as you would lay a stress on a particular word, for the purpose of being better understood. If I were to say "You are an *ass*," the accent would rest on *ass*; but were I to say "You are an *ass*," it would rest on *you*, Sir James. (*Reiterated shouts of laughter by the whole court, in which the judge and bench joined.*)

When silence was obtained, Lord Denman

accosted the chopfallen counsel: "Are you satisfied, Sir James?"

Sir James, deep-read as he was acknowledged, had become Scarlett, blushing like the rose, very unlike his brethren in general, and considering the tenor of Tom Cooke's evidence was not in accordance with the harmony of his feelings, being instrumental in holding him up to ridicule, Sir James, in rather a *con-spirito* style, told the witty Thomas Cooke to go down; and the popular vocalist and composer retired amidst screams of laughter and applause.

It is a true saying of one of our talented writers that "life's a lottery."

There were two men employed in the Dublin Theatre in 1812 who held different positions—one was the great architectural painter from the opera, London, Signor Marinavi; and the other was the veteran Palmer, master of the wardrobe. The Italian artist squandered away his splendid income, and was in old age reduced to grind colours at one of the theatres in London; while the other has passed through a long life as custodian of the costumes of Old Drury—proving that there was fidelity on one side and esteem on the other.

The drama in Ireland half a century back was thought more of than it is at present. The leading men of society often tried their powers at the Kil-

kenny Theatre. Here is the copy of a bill with the poet Moore's name:

THEATRE, KILKENNY.

On Monday evening, August 24, 1810, will be performed
Shakespeare's tragedy of

CORIOLANUS.

<i>Coriolanus</i>	.	.	.	Sir Wm. Beecher.
<i>Cominius</i>	.	.	.	Mr. Rory.
<i>Meninius</i>	.	.	.	Mr. Walker.
<i>Brutus</i>	.	.	.	Lieutenant Walker.
<i>Volumnia</i>	.	.	.	Miss Smith.
<i>Virgilia</i>	.	.	.	Miss Walstein.
<i>Child</i>	.	.	.	Miss Weston.

Volscians.

<i>Tullus Aufidius</i>	.	.	.	Mr. Power.
<i>Volusius</i>	.	.	.	Mr. Dalton.
<i>Officer</i>	.	.	.	Mr. Norie.

After which, Till Allingham's Farce of

FORTUNE'S FROLIC.

<i>Robin Roushead the Ploughman</i>	.	.	.	.	Mr. T. Moore.
<i>Old Snacks</i>	.	.	.	.	Mr. G. Ponsonby.
<i>Rattle</i>	.	.	.	.	Mr. Gardiner.
<i>Mr. Franks</i>	.	.	.	.	Hon. F. Browne.
<i>Miss Nancy</i>	.	.	.	.	Miss Dyke.
<i>Dolly</i>	.	.	.	.	Mrs. T. Cooke.
<i>Margery</i>	.	.	.	.	Mrs. Hitchcock.

A small work on the drama was published in Dublin from the pen of an actress of talent—Miss Macaulay. The book was entitled 'The Dangers

and Vicissitudes of a Theatrical Life.' This lady tried her fortune at Covent Garden in Marie Stuart, and failed. She then turned her attention to the pulpit for a living, like others, and commenced preaching in London, at the Rotunda in Blackfriars Road.

Here her conventicle was crowded to excess. Her splendid clear and declamatory powers were refreshing, and considered a treat to those who had sense and ears. Yet this gifted woman was attacked by the press, and called Miss "*Mac-all-Lie*."

When the high and intellectual join in the exhibition of the dramatic art, it must convince the worthless and upstart denouncer that his silly efforts to lower it are without effect. Even as far back as the days of Garrick, Lady Talbot bestowed her hand on an accomplished actor of the name of Bryan. Lady Fox Strangways became the wife of a comedian celebrated as Lord Foppington—O'Brien; and the Marchioness of Antrim was united to Mr. Phelps, of Drury Lane Theatre—not the present popular tragedian.

Such honours paid to the members of the stage are a proof of the high esteem it is held in by the exalted of society.

If we come down from the time of David Garrick to almost the present period, we shall find

many actresses that have ascended into the circles of the nobles of the land—such as the elegant and accomplished Miss Brunton: she was raised to the rank of Countess of Craven. Miss Farren became the Countess of Derby; Miss Bolton, Lady Thurlow; Miss Stephens, Countess of Essex; Miss O'Neill, Lady Beecher; Mrs. Nisbet, Lady Boothby; Miss Mellon, Duchess of St. Alban's; Miss Paton, Lady Lennox; Miss Foote, Countess of Harrington; and Miss Saunders, Lady Don: while on the Continent members of the stage have borne a coronet on their brow, and yet have often cheered the world with their vocal and histrionic powers—as witness Ristori, Sontag, and Piccolomini.

The amateur theatricals at the Kilkenny Theatre in 1810 made this beautiful town a *réunion* of the *élite* of Ireland, yet there never was an instance of any of the distinguished amateurs adopting the stage as a profession; while in the capital several abandoned Church, State, and Army for the desperate chance the histrionic art yields. Hughes—known in Dublin as Con Hughes—threw up a position in a Government office, and made his *début* at the Theatre Royal as Ollapod in 'The Poor Gentleman.' Hughes's imitation of Lord Norbury, the celebrated wit and judge—and his imitation of old Williams as Lord Grizzle—

gained great popularity; but his fame was not permanent: he sank, and died in neglect.

Gaven, another popular amateur, gave up a situation in the Customs of 300*l.* a-year for a secondary position on the stage; but what chance has unfledged talent in a theatre of rank among veterans noted for their abilities?

In the course of the first season Gaven found he was not on a bed of roses. Occasionally he had to do the walking gentleman. This unlooked-for style of *rôle* brought the young actor in collision with the Boys in the gallery; and although in his comedy and burlesque they applauded to the very echo, yet as a prim neatly-dressed young man they jeered and ridiculed in unmistakable terms.

Years before, in Dublin, the elder Mathews, in his acting as the walking gentleman, was treated in the same manner.

After a few seasons Gaven began to get weary, and sank into despondency and died.

He had abilities for the old men. His figure and face were not unlike Fawcett's, whose style he followed; and his imitations of Fullam and Williams, in Totterton and Vigil, were pronounced as near to life as possible.

When Edmund Kean appeared in Dublin, Gaven gave an imitation of him in *Shylock*. Kean himself witnessed it, and was the loudest

in his plaudits. Gaven's voice being husky, he could mimic that portion of Kean's that grated on the ear—the upper part—when he was impassioned.

It is seldom a man is a hero in his own country. Had Gaven retired to another locality, without doubt he would have made a stand in the comic old men. He possessed many requisites—education, gentlemanly manners, a comic broad face, and a thickset but not a vulgar figure.

Unless the dramatic profession is embraced when young, it had better not be embraced at all: it must be roughed. The two amateurs just noticed—Hughes and Gaven—were too advanced in life to be advised. Stern and inflexible parents could have no weight with grown-up children.

About this period two instances occurred in the Irish metropolis where two aspiring youths were cured of their theatrical mania.

A distinguished barrister was educating his son for the same profession; but, instead of studying Coke and Littleton, this young gentleman was pondering over Shakespeare and Otway.

Weeks passed, and months. Still the law was neglected, and the house rang with "A horse! a horse!—my kingdom for a horse!" At last the wise father hit upon the following expedient in order to cure his son's mania:—He took the

Theatre Royal for one night, and proposed to his son to play his favourite piece of Richard III. Of course the young gentleman gladly fixed on—like all amateurs—the most difficult part. The wise father—who, of course, had orders *ad libitum*—sent them forth among his friends; and as the *claqueurs* are arranged and marshalled in Paris, so were those in Dublin arranged, and given their cue when to take up the points. The night arrived, and the tragedy commenced; but as no points were made in either the first or second act, all passed off quietly till the third began, and then were let loose the dogs of war, and cat-calls, whistles, and watchmen's rattles were commingled in one universal din that beggared all description. The curtain dropped, never to rise more on the futile attempts of the young lawyer. Thus was cured of all his tragic flights a youth who in after-years became an eminent barrister.

Another aspirant for histrionic fame in Dublin felt a penchant for the drama, but this stripling was not so favoured with a kind indulgent parent; quite the reverse: his father was both fiery and irritable, and had the greatest horror of a theatre; in fact, he never entered one. His hopeful son arranged on the quiet to play Young Norval on an actor's benefit, and matters were so well managed that the old gentleman was kept in ignor-

ance till the evening of the performance, and then by some unlucky chance it reached his ears. Instead of flying into a passion and marring the entertainment, he resolved to add to it. Accordingly, when the doors were opened, he took his seat in the stage-box, enveloped in a cloak and armed with a stout horsewhip.

At length the curtain drew up, and the tragedy, that was soon to be a comedy, commenced. The youthful Norval appeared, and was received with the accustomed applause, and began the well-known address, "My name is Norval." The words were scarcely out of his mouth when the enraged father jumped up in the box and roared out, "You lie, you rascal! it isn't—it's Mat Finnigan!" and, suiting the action to the word, jumped on the stage and seized the noble shepherd; when flourishing the whip over his head, Lord Randolph, who was a little in the rear, rushed forward to the rescue of his *protégé*, and received as hearty a horsewhipping as he could desire, while the house was convulsed with screams of laughter. The curtain dropped, and this proved the young gentleman's last appearance on any stage.

Till a trial is made, acting is always considered an easy task to accomplish. The greatest celebrities—such as the Kembles, Siddonses, Jordans, Cookes, Keans, and O'Neills—were com-

pelled to rough it amidst adversity in the barn, instead of entering the Theatre Royal as principals surrounded by *claqueurs* and hireling scribes ; and ere they reached their proud position many trials had to be endured, and many obstacles surmounted.



CHAPTER III.

Miss O'Neill—Memoir of Conway—New Theatre in Hawkins Street—Anecdote of the lady who was buried alive—Manager Harwood—The Preaching Player—Edmund Kean and Connolly—Sheridan Knowles, in the double capacity of strolling actor and schoolmaster.

MISS O'NEILL made her *début* at the Theatre Royal, Crow Street, in 1811, in 'The Soldier's Daughter,' as the Widow Cheerly. This young actress—for she was only nineteen years of age—succeeded two staid actresses of great abilities; and no matter whether as Volumnia, Constance, Juliet, or Lady Teazle, she proved that Ireland had not lost her prestige since the days of Woffington.* Miss O'Neill left Dublin in 1815, and made her first appearance at Covent Garden in Juliet, and never in the metropolis was such an impression made by any actress—even Byron has left on record that he was fearful of trusting himself to witness Miss O'Neill's Juliet, fearing it might weaken the impression which Mrs. Siddons had left. Certainly, Miss O'Neill had one great ad-


* Mrs. Siddons in her 'Memoirs,' says: "No woman can reach perfection till the age of nine-and-twenty or thirty."

vantage on the night of her *début*, she had the best Romeo since the days of the silvertoned Barry Conway, and it was remarked that she never acted so well with any other performer.

I am proud to have the opportunity of bearing testimony to any act of liberality on the part of a manager. Miss O'Neill, at the end of the season, must have been astounded when the manager, Henry Harris, handed to her 500*l.* worth of diamonds—an act to which no parallel can be cited in the annals of the drama. Certainly she filled the theatre to the ceiling every night, and a full treasury was the consequence.

A pamphlet was published in London the first season that Miss O'Neill appeared, written by a man of literary talent, giving an outline of the young actress's talent and personal attractions. The following are some of its chief points: "There is a feminine and lovely delicacy in her features, such sweetness in her voice, such modest and graceful placidity in all her actions, that she seems peculiarly formed by nature for the sensibilities of private life; and I may venture with greater confidence on this declaration because I have the public voice with me.

"Miss O'Neill's representation of Mrs. Haller is the finest moral lesson that ever was delivered from the pulpit or professor's chair.



"This charming and youthful actress has rejected all pomp, pride, and circumstance of the studied, drilled, and mechanical heroine of the stage; discarding the trammels of custom, precedent, and conventional rules, handed down from one actress to another—preferring her own judgment and the pure effusions of nature working direct from the heart.

"On the first night of her appearance at Covent Garden, she established a fame by far exceeding that of *any* actress before her—although possessing the advantages of high provincial celebrity, years of experience, and family interest. Miss O'Neill is truly original; and previous to her *entrée* on

- the London boards, never witnessed any of the great people. Her figure is of the finest model—her features beautiful, yet full of expression—displaying at once purity of mind and loveliness of countenance. Her demeanour is graceful and modest, her voice melody itself in all its tones; and with the exception of the greatest actress of her day, the celebrated and original Lady Randolph—Mrs. Crawford—Miss O'Neill is the only actress with that genuine feeling that is capable of melting her audiences to tears. In her hand the handkerchief is not hoisted as the *only* signal of distress. Her pauses are always judicious and impressive; her attitudes appropriate and effective, either in regard

to ease or dignity. She indulges in no sudden starts; no straining after effect; no wringing of hands, or screaming at the top of the voice; no casting her eyes round the boxes, searching for applause, or addressing her discourse to the lustre or the gods in the upper regions; no whining or pining, moaning or groaning, roaring or bellowing, 'out-heroding Herod.' No; the great beauty of Miss O'Neill is that she never o'ersteps the modesty of nature; thus casting to the winds all the little tricks which *secondary* actresses resort to."

Miss O'Neill made her last appearance in Queen Katharine, at Covent Garden, in 1819, to a crowded and brilliant audience, and retired from the London stage in her bloom, and in the full splendour of her triumphant career.

She visited the city that made her—Dublin—and played a round of her characters for the last time in public. She then became the wife of Sir Wm. Beecher, M.P. for Mallow, county of Cork.

Conway—called "handsome Conway" in the 'Life of Mrs. Piozzi,' the Mrs. Thrale of Johnson's days—stood in an equal degree in Dublin with Miss O'Neill in popularity; and in Falconbridge, Romeo, Alexander, Jaffier, Mark Antony, and Hamlet, was declared by the critics unequalled even in London. His power over the female heart was well known; and what it must have been may

be surmised when the daughter of a duke went almost raving mad for this Apollo of an actor!

In 1810, when the great and accomplished leading actor, Holman, withdrew from Dublin, Conway was engaged to succeed him, and soon became the most popular performer in the theatre: even when "pitted with the noblest Roman of them all"—Kemble—Conway displayed original powers of genius, that divided the applause with the London star. In the course of his brilliant career in the Irish metropolis, he received flattering offers from Covent Garden; yet, if he had given the matter mature consideration, it was his interest to remain among the people that appreciated his talent in every possible way.

He well knew the Kembles at Covent Garden had their *clique*, and were well-established in public opinion, while in Dublin he reigned undisputed, the first actor of the kingdom. Notwithstanding, in 1813, Conway signed an engagement for three years with the management of Covent Garden, and left the city that had cheered and fanned his dawning talent. He soon however had cause to repent the change, being compelled by the terms of his engagement to play seconds to Kemble; and although his *Romeo* was acknowledged by the unbiassed unequalled, yet in a few years he sunk even in his own estimation, and sailed for the United States.

In 1828, news reached England that this elegant and idolised tragedian put an end to all his earthly cares and troubles by jumping into the sea on his passage to Boston.

The last time I ever witnessed Conway's acting was in the Birmingham Theatre, in 1820, when he represented Lear, a character (in appearance) he was every way unsuited for. Only imagine a man six feet two inches, the *beau ideal* of Romeo, Falconbridge, Alexander, Fitzjames, and Mark Antony, personating the aged and venerable king; yet, in regard to the embodiment of the *rôle*, he stood out in bold relief, amidst a staff of talented actors, in a superior style to all except Kean. I have stated Conway, in the end, lost his own opinion. This was caused by the attacks of hireling petty scribes, whose praises would have been censure in disguise; yet he permitted the critiques of imbeciles on his talent to crush his spirit and undermine his very reason.

There is no question but Conway was the only actor fit to succeed John Kemble at Covent Garden in 1817, when that tragedian withdrew from public life; and if the ill-fated subject of my notice had remained in provincial shades till that period, he would have stood alone as the Brutus, Coriolanus, Alexander, Hamlet, Romeo, and Jaffier, of the day; for this sole reason that his acting was

not founded on Kemble, as that of all others except Edmund Kean.

In the beginning of the present century, pleasing the eye with gorgeous scenery and cavalcades were not so much resorted to as pleasing the senses with legitimate dramas and good acting; so when the Dublin Theatre was deprived by London managers of its sterling actors and actresses, then the spirited and liberal manager, Frederick Jones, sunk in a financial sense; and in 1819, to complete the onslaught the metropolitan dramatic despots had made, he was deprived in a most unjust manner of his patent, and ruined altogether.

Jones retired to his suburban seat, Fortix Grove, where he ended his days in quiet; while a new theatre was erected and opened in 1820, in Hawkins Street, by Henry Harris of Covent Garden.

The press and the public resented the treatment which Jones received, and after four seasons Harris had to retire, deputing Abbott as his lieutenant. The deputy was equally unsuccessful as the leader, and in two or three seasons Abbott vacated his position as manager. Alfred Bunn became the next director; but his term of dramatic sway was brief indeed, for matters became so critical, that Alfred had to beat a sudden retreat in the shades of evening.

Though Ireland could boast of a theatre perfect in all its details, I am sorry to say the Crow Street establishment was its only one, except Belfast. This I can vouch from personal experience in 1813, when I became a member of the Dundalk Theatre. The manager was a captain on half-pay. This gentleman's theatrical name was Harwood, but his real cognomen was Colthurst. His father had been an eminent solicitor in Dublin, and is mentioned in the 'Life of Edmund Burke' as legal adviser to the Lord-Lieutenant's secretary, Hamilton—known as "one-speech Hamilton," as he never in the Irish House of Commons attempted a second speech after he took his seat, and that was so brilliant that he was fearful of trying his powers again, in case of failure. The same feeling took possession of Goldsmith after he wrote his one novel, the 'Vicar of Wakefield.' It would have been a very good thing for the public if other talented writers had followed the renowned Oliver's plan. Harwood's company was what is called a sharing concern, or commonwealth. I must confess, when I bring to mind the distribution of the spoil at that period, my ideas of a commonwealth are not so much in favour of such a state of things as to desire a commonwealth in this country. The manager took five shares—three for his scenery, &c., one for himself, and one for his daughter.

The scenery was on a limited scale, and the painting not altogether in the Telbin or Stanfield style; yet it was very picturesque, and in regard to utility could transport the ideas of the auditor equally from the shores of England to those of the main of America.

Captain Harwood, although the light comedian of his company, was upwards of seventy years of age, and would indulge in the juveniles. He was the Bob Handy, Young Rapid, Frederick Bramble, and Young Wilding.

The magistrates assume a power in Ireland unknown in England. They take upon themselves the giving and taking away permission for theatrical performances.

Although the theatre in Dundalk had authority to open, yet an order arrived that it should be closed; and so it remains. The manager and his troupe had to move on to Drogheda, a handsome and hospitable town, where the actors were not interfered with in the exercise of their calling.

A respectable family, in this locality, who were friends to the drama, were ever noticed by all strangers who entered the town. The mother, a few years before the theatre opened, died, and was buried. Being a woman of property, she had desired that a valuable ring which she wore should be buried with her. A servant in the

family being aware of this, made up his mind that so valuable a gem should not be lost to the world. So at the witching time of night, when churchyards yawn, he stole stealthily along, opened the grave and coffin, and commenced his midnight plunder. But from evil at times comes good. In cutting the finger off the corpse to get possession of the ring, the lady revived, and exclaimed, "John, what's the matter?" John, thunderstruck, without waiting to reply, made his way out of the churchyard, while the lady raised herself up, walked home, and knocked at the door, which was opened by her astonished husband.

This lady recovered, and lived many years afterwards. I have seen her as she frequently visited the theatre. A short time ago, the London journals mentioned an aged lady's death in Drogheda, and alluded to the circumstance of the ring and her having been buried alive in her early days.

This tale has been often told, though the locality has been placed in another quarter; but it is an authenticated fact well known in Drogheda.

The biographers of the great London actors have spoken of those that stroll or wander in a very contemptuous style, never bearing in mind that the elevated party they are plastering with their fulsome flattery began life in the barn or outhouse.

Those barns were absolutely the first school or place of instruction where the unfledged actor received the impetus in his course to the Theatre Royal. Those who formed a part and parcel of a strolling company never lost cast, but were always eligible for the national theatre of the country when their abilities were discovered. Harwood had in his troupe men of talent and of education; but they were raw in their profession, and lacked two very necessary qualities, industry and enterprise. They were content with their hard lot; and as long as they could get drink and victuals and good parts, they were satisfied.

A gentleman living in the suburbs of Drogheda invited the manager to his house frequently to dine. As Harwood had seen service with Admiral Kappel, and as he had moved as a gentleman in Dublin and Edinburgh when attached to the theatres of those cities, he was a man who abounded in anecdote, and his society was consequently everywhere courted. Christmas being near, this gentleman considered a good dinner on the day that comes but once a year would be desirable, and accordingly he told the manager that he would present to the company a quarter of an ox. "I suppose," said he, "they can eat." "Yes, by my faith," cries Harwood, "they can ate indeed, but it would do your heart good to see them drink."

Generally speaking, actors are considered to have a greater penchant for the latter than the former. That is the great evil of the profession, as it is indeed of all professions, and of all who foolishly spend their money, injure their health, and shorten their days; and for what? It diverts the hard-earned cash into an improper channel—it feeds the useless and worthless; and scarcely a murder that is committed but the wretch acknowledges “drink to have been the cause.”

There was an actor in Harwood’s company, Macklin—no relation to Charles—educated in Trinity College, Dublin, for the Church. This talented man, instead of embracing the position laid out by his friends, made his appearance at the Crow Street Theatre, and became a stationary actor. Wild and intemperate companions brought on intemperate habits, and Macklin was discharged, and compelled to wander in the provinces, abandoned by his friends. When engaged, he acted; and when his necessities pressed, he preached.

Yes, Macklin may be called the first of open-air preachers. Such a mode of holding forth in highways and byeways was unknown fifty years back. Macklin was engaged as a star-preacher in a certain town, and all the walls were placarded with the name of the *reverend* gentleman.

Macklin was one of those that never said “no,”

when asked to take a glass; and on his way to the chapel where he was to preach, he was tempted, and had not the moral courage to resist. He sipped and sipped, and when he reached the conventicle and was ushered up into the pulpit, his pious meditations took such a turn that it was discovered reason was made prisoner, and the pious discourse so earnestly anticipated fell to the ground, while the orator was conveyed to his lodgings half-seas over.

Macklin when sober could declaim with effect, and once, on the Calton Hill in Edinburgh, he had a congregation of 6000 persons, that were rivetted and charmed with his oratorical powers. This singular character made it a rule never to remain more than two or three months in one locality. He annually made a circuit of the three kingdoms. When bordering on sixty years of age, a relative died and left him 400*l.* a-year, and then he changed and became entirely a new man.

Among the military, the most awkward recruits are the parsons, doctors, and lawyers; but in dramatic matters, I have known such characters turn out the best actors.

Farquhar, in his comedy of the 'Recruiting Officer,' notices the Welsh curate who had enlisted, and who if it had not been for his fiddle-playing, would have been dismissed the service.

The tragic hero of Harwood's company was bred to the law; and although his father placed him in a position in the Lord Chancellor's office in Dublin, he preferred to be *introduced* in 'Black-eyed Susan,' and cast his fate in the uncertainties of provincial acting in the rural districts. This was Timothy Conolly; a man capable of embodying Hamlet or Romeo, and who yet for years wandered in his native country amidst difficulties and troubles. Finding tragedy so unprofitable, he threw himself into comedy, and assumed the broad and racy Irishmen.

In 1825, while performing in the Cork Theatre, Edmund Kean witnessed his Irish Tutor, and pronounced him the best Irishman on the stage. Kean, like George Canning, being the son of Irish parents, always boasted of his nationality, and called himself "Kane." Edmund Kean gave Conolly a letter of recommendation to Price, the manager of Drury Lane. This manager was an American, and was called Half-Price, in consequence of his *swearing* propensities.

Big with hope, Conolly crossed the Channel, and entered London for the first time. Having waited on the potentate of Drury Lane, Price paid attention to Kean's letter, and made arrangements for a trial, and accordingly the popular farce, written by the Earl of Glengal, 'The Irish Tutor,' *was cast*, and announced in the bills. However,

Conolly never appeared, for some hidden interest was employed in the theatre to prevent his *début*, and his funds failing, compelled the unfortunate comedian to retrace his steps back to that land which he idolised. These particulars I had from Conolly in London, July 1825. In 1830, this comedian succeeded his father as head clerk in the Lord Chancellor's office, Four Courts, Dublin, where he eventually ended his mortal career.

Writers have ever considered strolling actors fair game for attack, and have stood upon no ceremony in holding them up to ridicule. Even such a beautiful and gifted writer as Washington Irving has denominated them as "vagabonds," while Marryatt treats itinerant actors with greater contumely and contempt. Yet if we take into consideration the trials the country actors have had to wade through at a period when regular theatres were rare indeed, it cannot be denied but, as a body, they generally attracted the notice of the noble and dignified portion of the community. I have known in the little town of Hillsborough the Downshire family treat the actors of Haywood's company with the greatest kindness and familiarity.

There was one actor, Livingstone, a Scotchman, whose personation of Sir Pertinax MacSycophant elicited from the Marquis of Downshire the highest eulogiums. This comedian was a diamond

in the rough, and having never emerged out of a poor strolling company, was deficient in that dignity which the most difficult and brilliant Scotchman that was ever penned demanded. In regard to force, depth of feeling, pure and natural dialect, and raciness of humour, I pronounce Livingstone the best interpreter I have ever witnessed of the 'Man of the World.'

Little do the public understand the trials and cares endured by actors in the rural districts at the beginning of the present century. If England had made some advances by establishing neat compact theatres in localities where formerly stood merely barns, Ireland remained in a primitive state; and the gifted Thespian, after wading through a five-act tragedy as the blood-stained Richard, perhaps was rewarded with one shilling and three pieces of candle as his share, while the rapacious manager would convert to his own use the chief portion of the proceeds. It is no wonder, then, that the unfortunate actors, doomed by circumstances to launch their fate in such a troubled sea, should founder and become a total wreck, "dying ere they sicken."

As an instance of this, a juvenile actress, scarcely seventeen, the daughter of the manager, Harwood, often compared to the first woman of her age, Miss O'Neill, never soared beyond an itinerant

company, and sank into obscurity unknown and unthought of by the London biographers.

In 1814 there was settled in Belfast, teaching "the young idea how to shoot," a character that in a few years afterwards burst on a London public as the author of the historical tragedy of 'Virginus.' This was Sheridan Knowles. This highly-gifted man first entered Belfast as an actor in the theatre under Montague Talbot's management; but finding the stage a doubtful financial calling, he wisely abandoned it.

Knowles being a native of a country where oratory is a part and parcel of the people's natural gifts, gave up his school, and took up his abode in Glasgow as a professor of elocution. Here he prospered, for he was among the only people that feel an interest in acquiring an art little understood by the community in general. Many have come forward to give instructions in elocution without gifted powers, and their efforts have ever proved a nullity; but as Knowles was capable of speaking a speech "trippingly on the tongue," he succeeded. Knowles, like his countrymen Oliver Goldsmith and Thomas Moore, attempted every style of literature, and even as a pulpit-orator commanded the attention of the public, when he held forth at Vernon Chapel, in the metropolis of England.

CHAPTER IV.

A Strolling Company in the West of Scotland—Greenock and the scenery of the Clyde—The last days of an old Actor—Moss, Macklin's pupil—A Manager and his Company in the Lock-up—The Players driven from Whitehaven, because they frightened the herrings from the nets—London Theatricals in 1816—The Rival Houses—Kean, Mrs. Bartley, Sinclair, Emery, Miss Stephens, Mrs. Egerton—Lucius Junius Brutus Booth—Maywood: his début and failure—Croyden Theatre in 1817—Tyrone Power in 1818 and 1834—Opening of the Coburg, and list of Company—Theatre at Peckham—Buckstone as Walking Gentleman, and Power as Light Comedian—Greenwich Theatre opened by Saville Faucett—Planché's début as an Actor—First appearance of Miss Huddart—Mrs. Warner.

My respected and gentlemanly manager, Captain Harwood, in his campaigns through the Emerald Isle, often led his unfortunate troupe into awkward dilemmas; and although the commander had a base for his operations (his half-pay), yet the company had to battle as they could, in order to preserve intact the baggage and scrip and scrippage.

After twenty months of storm and sunshine, in December 1814 I crossed the Channel for the first

time, and landed in the good town of Greenock, on the picturesque and beautiful Clyde—the river whose waters were the first in the British Isles that felt the pressure of that power which Fulton brought to perfection in the capital of the New World in 1805.

Yes: while the waters of the Thames and the Liffey were untroubled by the steam-engine, the bonnie Clyde was fated to boast as the first spot in Europe where that invention should be tested, the civilising power of which is daily drawing nations together and uniting mankind in the bonds of love and friendship, instead of keeping them in enmity and hatred.

In speaking of the Clyde, those who have never entered that noble river by Bute's Isle and witnessed the romantic scenery on either side of its broad and expansive bosom, can have no idea of its magnificence and beauty.

I have navigated the Rhine, Rhone, Seine, Loire, Garonne, Scheldt, Arno, Tiber, Trent, Thames, Dee, Tweed, Wye, Tay, Colne, and Liffey, and yet must admit the great and powerful streams alluded to failed to impress me with the same charm and wonder as the bonnie and beautiful Clyde.

In bleak and stormy December I made my *debut* in the ancient burgh of Stirling. This

event occurred on the occasion of the benefit of an aged and crippled actor, who in his day had delighted three capitals,—London, Dublin, and Edinburgh. This was Moss, the pupil of Charles Macklin, and the original in Dublin of Lord Lumbercourt, in the comedy of ‘The Man of the World.’

Moss sustained the rank of principal comedian in Dublin for several seasons, and afterwards was attached to the Theatre Royal, Edinburgh. It was here—in Modern Athens—he appeared as Shylock; and his delineation of the most difficult of Shakespearian characters was acknowledged by the Edinburgh critics the best of the day. In fact, so great an impression was made that ‘The Merchant of Venice’ never failed to attract a numerous audience.

Moss caught the inspiration from the renowned Macklin, whose Jew, by Pope’s acknowledgment, was unrivalled even in the days of David Garrick, and he bequeathed to his *protégé*, Moss, that conception which descended to the most original and extraordinary Shylock of any period—Edmund Kean.

The fame of Moss’s acting soon reached London, and George Colman sent him an offer for the Haymarket Theatre, where he made his first appearance in Molière’s comedy of ‘L’Avare’ (the

Miser). So powerful was Moss as Lovegold, that night after night he was hailed with acclamations.

Moss considered that he had made his ground good in the metropolis; but, alas! he reckoned without his host; for on a certain night he was guilty of one of those practical jokes, too common in former days, that ruined him: in the scene where the Miser rushes about the stage distracted at the loss of his gold, in the fury of his acting he spied the leader of the band seated on his perch, and as he was adorned with a powdered wig Moss fancied it too tempting to be resisted; accordingly he made an onslaught on Monsieur Nozay's *toupie*, and discovered to the public view the Frenchman's bald *tête*; thus bringing into ridicule a man for whom Colman had the highest esteem. From this M. Nozay the slang cry of the gallery of "Play up, Nosey!" took its origin.

This insult the manager resented in the following manner:—

After the run of 'The Miser,' George Colman produced his comedy, in three acts, of 'Ways and Means;' and instead of giving the comic old man, Sir David Dunder, to Moss, he cast it to a handsome young man, Jack Bannister; and the beau ideal of a comic old man, Moss, was obliged to appear in M'Quirk—a contemptible character, far beneath his talent.

Sir David was entirely out of the line of Ban-
nister; but being a native and to the manners
born, and the son of a London actor, were suffi-
cient for him to play "high, low, Jack, and the
game" with impunity.

Moss returned to the provinces, and resolved
to have nothing more to do with tyrannical man-
agers, and so became one himself.

A circumstance in Moss's career as a manager
happened in the town of Whitehaven. He opened
the theatre with some degree of success; but in
less than a week—on a Saturday night—Moss and
his troupe were conveyed to the lock-up. There
they remained all Sunday, in durance vile. On
Monday morning they were taken before the
magistrates, and a most novel charge was brought
against them. An inhabitant of the town, called
respectable and rational, came forward in open
court to denounce the actors as a curse to society
in general, but to Whitehaven in particular. This
wiseacre declared: "Before the theatre opened,
there was an immense take of herrings, but since
the players entered the town they have all fled,
and the fishermen are now suffering. This misfor-
tune he ascribed entirely to the actors, who always
bring a curse wherever they appear." The magis-
trates looked over their books and consulted the
man that generally knows something—the town-

clerk. They then found nothing could be done in the business but to shut up the theatre and send the sons of the "Wicked One" away. This is no romance, but an actual fact.

Scotland was the scene of Moss's campaigns. He was manager of the theatre in Dumfries in 1805. The low comedian was a young man of seventeen, and this aspirant derived from the veteran manager instructions of great benefit in his after career. One evening, while Moss was representing Shylock, this youthful low comedian exclaimed, "If ever *I* should play Shylock, it shall be after the style of Mr. Moss." The actors around him burst into a loud fit of laughter, tickled, no doubt, at the stripling's arrogance. But in nine years afterwards, this presumptuous young man *did* play Shylock at the National Theatre; and this youth was *Edmund Kean*.

Moss in management was unfortunate; and when I came in collision with him in 1814, in Stirling, I found him poor, deprived of the use of his limbs, and still by dire necessity compelled to exercise his powers in the trial-scene of Shylock, in order to raise the daily rations. Broken-down in spirit and body, I could perceive the master-mind in his trial-scene of 'The Merchant of Venice,' although obliged to sit during the performance—a portraiture admitted by the best of judges supe-

rior to either that of Cooke or Kemble, particularly the latter. Kean was allowed by Byron, Hazlitt, and Sheridan to be the best Shylock since the days of Macklin; and here was the man that laid the foundation of that great delineation—a man the equal of any comedian in the metropolis, and superior to most in education; for Moss was trained for one of the liberal professions, and yet in old age was deserted and abandoned by that public he had so oft delighted in his career of half-a-century. Such things are enough to make us doubt the assertions of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, that “the drama has taken deep root in this country,” or lead us to imagine it was rather like the root of the boy’s twig, that he had planted in his tiny garden over-night, and pulled up in the morning to see how it was going on.

If sterling talent is crushed and overpowered, what becomes of the *legitimate* drama? Why, it sinks to the state of a country deprived by emigration of its people, alluded to by the first writer of his age—Goldsmith :

“But a bold peasantry, their country’s pride,
When once destroyed can never be supplied.”

After two years’ sojourn among a people perfectly alive to literature and the drama, I bade adieu to Caledonia, and arrived in London, September 1816.

A sketch of the London theatres at this period may not be uninteresting :

Theatre Royal, Drury Lane. On the opening night of the season 'Macbeth' was performed. Macbeth, Kean ; Macduff, Alex. Rae ; Malcolm, Jas. Wallack ; Banquo, Bengough ; Duncan, Powell ; Hecate, Bellamy ; speaking Witches, Dowton, Munden, and Knight ; Lady Macbeth, Mrs. Bartley.

Here Kean had unquestionably the best Lady Macbeth since Mrs. Siddons disappeared from the stage. Mrs. Bartley possessed every quality for this superhuman creation of Shakespeare—a noble and expressive face, a bold and flexible voice, a dignified and commanding action, and a thorough conception of her author.

London at this period did not number a fourth of its present population, yet two national theatres could be supported, with a weekly expenditure of 2,000*l*. These establishments had all the available talent in regard to the principals ; while a large portion of the stock actors were the *protégés* of persons of influence, foisted on the managers, without talent or experience. Of course such recommendations were kept in the shade.

'Guy Mannering' was produced this year at Covent Garden. The following cast will give some idea of the company :

Dominie Sampson, Liston ; Henry Bertram,

Sinclair; Colonel Mannering, Abbott; Dandie Dinmont, Emery; Dirk Hatteraick, Tokeby; Gilbert Glossin, Blanchard; Baillie Mucklethrift, Simmons. Lucy Bertram, Miss Stephens; Miss Mannering, Miss Matthews; Mrs. M'Candlish, Mrs. Davenport; Flora, Mrs. Gibbs; and Meg Merrilies, Mrs. Egerton.

If Sir Walter Scott had searched the three kingdoms for representatives for this drama, he could not possibly have equalled the Covent Garden company: they were justly formed by nature for the parts assigned to them. Liston, for instance: he was tall—a scholar, combining both the humorous and pathetic. Now the Dominies which I have witnessed were all serious. Those of Dublin and Liverpool were dead failures compared to the great original of London. Liston was pathetic, rich, quaint, self-possessed, and by a look could convulse the house with screams of laughter; and when he departed from the stage of life, the Dominie died with him. The same may be said of Baillie Nicol Jarvie.

Emery made the Liddesdale farmer, Dinmont, entirely his own. Emery, like Liston, possessed those qualities which indicate the first-rate artiste—pathos and humour; and never, since Emery's death, has Dandie Dinmont, Tyke, or Giles been brought out in such bold and original relief.

Dirk Hatteraick, the bull-headed half Dutchman, found in Tokely one formed in person for the task of portraying such a lawless ruffian. Tokely was a broad thick-set man, with a big head and a thick neck : and being a hard actor with a gruff unpleasant voice rendered him the beau-ideal of the daring smuggler.

Lucy Bertram, simple and unassuming, was personated by Miss Stephens, now the Countess of Essex. Her singing of 'Rest thee, Babe,' was the most delicious gem in the operatic play ; yet the composer—Whittaker—is never mentioned in these modern times. No, it is all "Bishop, Bishop."

But the great star among the females was Mrs. Egerton, in the old gipsy, Meg Merrilies. Never was such a character more truthfully sustained than by Mrs. Egerton in her rendering of this brilliant creation of the Scotch novelist.

Meg Merrilies was originally intended for Mrs. Renaud, the once celebrated Mrs. Powell of Drury Lane ; but being now in the sear, she was necessitated to fill the Lady Capulets instead of the Lady Macbeths. But when the Witch of Dorncleugh was intrusted to her, she repudiated the idea, and left the theatre and the city for the capital of Scotland, and, strange to say, accepted that rôle in Edinburgh which she had refused in London, and gained universal approbation ; while

Mrs. Egerton, by her acting and appearance in the old Hag, jumped at once from obscurity to the full blaze of popularity. If 'Guy Mannering' had never been written, Mrs. Egerton would never have been known. She was the old witch in face, figure, and in every movement. Her splendid voice, when she exclaimed—

"And Bertram's right and Bertram's might
Shall meet on Ellangowan's height,"

always elicited a burst of universal applause. Mrs. Egerton was quite at home in the part; there were no strainings after effect, and no twistings or shufflings à la Macready; all was easy, calm, and dignified. Although Mrs. Egerton stood amidst such overpowering talent, still she appeared like "a huge rock o'ertopping the waves."

This excellent actress was eventually deprived of reason, caused by the sacrifice of those earnings intended for the winter of life, lost in a theatrical speculation.

At this period the rivalry between the two great houses ran so high that the management of Covent Garden employed agents to scour the country round in search of a *second* Kean. At length one was discovered in the person of Booth, who in stature and style of characters and acting resembled that great original.

In 1817 a trial was offered to Booth at Covent Garden, where he made his *début* in Richard III. At the end of the tragedy there was a doubt whether it was a success or not; and the manager being out of town, those acting as deputies had no power to treat with the actor. In this dilemma overtures were made to Booth to essay his abilities at Drury Lane in the part of Iago.

This offer was accepted, and he made his appearance in the tragedy of 'Othello' to a densely-filled theatre. Kean was the Moor; but at the commencement strangers were in doubt who was Kean or who was Booth, there was such a similarity between the rivals; but as the tragedy progressed to the third act, all doubt fled, and Kean displayed such acting as not only electrified the young, but the oldest critics pronounced it beyond all precedent.

Booth discovered that he had made a false move in placing himself in collision with the man he imitated, and the day after his trial at old Drury he signed articles to return to Covent Garden for three years. He proved an attraction at the national theatre; and when Lear was revived his performance of the aged king met with universal approbation.


As a proof that Booth was an actor of unquestionable talent in 'Lear,' he had Charles Kemble

as Edgar, and Macready as Edmund, and still threw both into the shade.

At the end of his engagement, finding he was incapable of equalling Kean, he set sail for America. There, in the New World, he gave a proof of his conception of dramatic matters; for he took a farm and cultivated cabbages, and on the market-night delighted his agricultural friends with Richard or Sir Giles Overreach. Booth had three—I was going to say *Christian*—names, Lucius Junius Brutus. But several public characters were christened after the Greek and Roman worthies. There was Horace Walpole, and we have a Horace at the present day—Horace Wigan; then the Duke of Wellington's brother-in-law, Sir Hercules Pakenham, and the gifted Dionysius Lardner and Dion Boucicault, all called after celebrated heathen characters.

Many were the rivals brought into the field to annihilate Edmund Kean; but as fast as they came, he sent them withering into obscurity, or, what was almost as contemptible, into a melodramatic position.

It was a saying in Scotland, at the beginning of this century, that Moss had made more actors than any manager in the profession. There can be no doubt of this; for he had himself been trained by one of the leading men of his day—



Macklin—and possessed a cultivated mind and keen judgment. At the period that Edmund Kean was under the management of Moss in Dumfries there was another stripling in the same theatre. This was an Edinburgh youth that afterwards gained a reputation in Belfast as Talbot's low comedian, Maywood.

In 1817, fired by the success of his fellow-pupil Edmund Kean, Maywood determined to try conclusions with him, and make the attempt of casting him into the shade. Through the interest of a noble patron in the north of Ireland, Maywood's name was placed on the list of Drury Lane's staff of actors of the *première* class, and selected Shylock for his first appearance in the metropolis.

Maywood having studied in the same school with the great London Shylock, and bearing in mind a vivid recollection of all Moss's points and tremendous bursts of passion, interspersed with pathos of the most effective quality, conceived he stood every chance of a successful result. Here Maywood was not guilty of a false calculation; for his *début* in the 'Merchant of Venice' created quite a sensation, and surpassed any that had taken place since Kean burst on the public.

Each night that Maywood appeared in Shylock he increased in public favour, and was congratulated on all hands as a successful actor. So far so

well; and if he had selected a second character to back up Shylock, no doubt he would have been retained at Drury Lane as a second to Kean. Against the advice of many of his friends, however, he appeared in Richard III.; and although it was not a break-down, yet it did not come up to public expectation. In fact, Kean had done so much with the crook-back tyrant, that it became dangerous ground for any other actor to tread on. Maywood's delineation of this most arduous character, particularly in the stirring scenes, met with great applause; but in the quiet portions of the tragedy the attempt was considered a failure. Still the tragedy was repeated. The third character selected was a most unhappy choice—it was a part which John Kemble had made entirely his own—Zanga, in the Rev. Dr. Young's tragedy of 'The Revenge.' The noble Moor may be called a declamatory rôle, and Kemble's Roman face, stately person, and majestic tread of the stage, gave him advantages over every other actor in the African prince. Maywood lacked these requisites; and although his splendid voice and dark eye, together with his energy, kept up the interest of the tragedy, yet signs of disapprobation were evident before the fifth act commenced, and at the conclusion an untoward circumstance marred and destroyed all his previous efforts, and entirely

damned his fame. It was this: at that portion where Zanga bestrides the prostrate body of Don Alenzo, Maywood, in stepping across, by some accident fell, and the audience, instead of sympathising, burst out into roars of laughter, and the curtain dropt, never to rise again on the unfortunate actor's histrionic efforts at old Drury.

Thus ended all the hopes entertained by poor Maywood.

Maywood wisely crossed the Atlantic, and found a home in the New World. In a few years, to the surprise of his friends, he returned to England and made another attempt in London. This was at the Surrey, in Macklin's comedy of 'The Man of the World.' The part selected was Sir Pertinax MacSycophant. Maywood being a Scotchman, and having witnessed George Cooke in the character, gave just grounds for a favourable result. The contrary, however, was the case. Amid his splendidly-delivered speeches, given with the greatest judgment and point, he was frequently interrupted, till at last, goaded beyond endurance, he stopped, addressed the audience in a discourse any thing but complimentary, and left the theatre without finishing the classically-written comedy.

In the spring of 1817, the Croydon Theatre was opened under the management of Nuna and Eugene M'Carthy. The company consisted of Messrs. Ham-

blin, M'Carthy, Farrell, Monk, Harrison, W. Watkins, Donaldson, Lynch, and Lindsay; Mesdames M'Carthy, Nuna, Frankly, Harrison, and Monk. Lindsay, mentioned here, was an Irish comedian, who in his early days was in the army as a doctor; a few years after this, he met with a watery grave in the canal near Dublin.

The two London rivals, Edmund Kean and Booth, alternately honoured the good people of Croydon with a display of their talent; and John Emery, the Garrick of Yorkshire actors, paid a starring visit to this suburban town. He made his appearance in his unrivalled character of Robert Tyke, in Morton's comedy of 'The School of Reform.' Emery's delineation of this hardened villain so excited a sailor in the pit, that he made two or three attempts to get on the stage, in order to give Emery what he considered he richly deserved, a good thrashing, but was prevented by his messmates: at that scene in the fourth act, however, where Tyke takes the old man's purse, and discovers directly he is his own parent, and delivers the well-known sentence that always electrified the audience — "What! rob my own feyther!" the sailor, no longer able to restrain his passion, jumped up and roared out, "Yes, you vagabond, you'd rob a church!"

In those days the managers of Covent Garden

and Drury always produced with the pantomime at Christmas another treat for the young and old children—the questionably moral tragedy of ‘George Barnwell.’

Two countrymen visited Covent Garden on a boxing-night, for the purpose of seeing Joe Grimaldi’s clown. Having arrived at half-price, and taken their seats in the gallery before George Barnwell was concluded, they conceived it was the pantomime: Charles Kemble as Barnwell, and the stately Murray as Thoroughgood, were engaged in one of the scenes, and eliciting great applause, when one countryman said to the other, “Which is Joey?”

The walking gentleman of Drury Lane, Barnard, having been lodged in the King’s Bench on suspicion of debt, two candidates stood forward for his situation in the theatre; and these were Tyrone Power and a young tragic hero, Hamblin. Although the salary for the position was only three pounds a-week, and the characters trifling, yet Power was rejected, and Hamblin accepted. This was in 1818. Sixteen years after this, Tyrone commanded at the Haymarket the highest salary ever given to a comedian—150*l.* per week.

These are not affairs of dramatic history gathered from hearsay, but facts of which I was cognisant, being a member of a theatre at the time in which Power was the light comedian.

Jones, the founder of the Surrey Theatre, having obtained the patronage of Prince Leopold after his marriage with the universally-lamented Princess Charlotte, laid the foundation of a theatre in the New Cut, Lambeth, which was opened on Whit-Monday, 1818. This house was called after his royal highness, the Coburg.

The managers were Joseph Glossop, Jones, Dunn, and Serres. The latter manager was marine-painter to his Majesty, and a member of the family that laid claim to the Cumberland title. The company consisted of the following persons: Hamerton, Munro, M'Carthy, Stebbing, Jew Davis, Davidge, Bryant, Harwood, Gallott, Le Clercq, Donaldson, T. Blanchard, Bradley, T. Hill, Barrymore sen., Norman, Usher, Simpson, Holman, Ben. Webster, Farebrother, Cartlitch, Stanley, Guy, Honnor, Ashbury, Willis, and Master Wieland; Mesdames Thompson, Watson, Gallott, Scott, Le Clercq, J. Simpson, Bennett, Dennett, Nicholls, Tose, and Foote; scenic artists, Messrs Clarkson, Stanfield, Morris, and Scruton; leader of band, Erskine. Although this theatre opened with splendour, and had the presence and patronage of the Duke and Duchess of Kent, Duke of Cambridge, Duke of Sussex, and Duchess of Wellington, yet a fortune was sunk in it, and the ill-fated house was the means of destroying the prospects of a man

who had done more than any other in improving the taste of the Surrey side of the water, and this was the gifted Thomas Dibdin, who was ruined by the opposition house, celebrated for its *blue-flame melodrama*.

Peckham, in 1818, boasted of a theatre that served occasionally as a nursery for unfledged talent.

At this period, the autumn of 1818, a young man made his first appearance there as Captain Aubrey, in the melodrama of 'The Forest of Bondy;' this youth was the present veteran manager of the Haymarket—Buckstone. The light comedian and tragedian of this rural theatre was Tyrone Power, whose energies were exercised to make a stand at one of the large houses in the highest *rôles* of the legitimate drama; however, fate ordered it otherwise, for although not an Irishman by birth, he was ordained to achieve a popularity unexampled since the days of Jack Johnstone.

I have some authority in speaking of this celebrated comedian, having represented the following characters with him in Peckham: Old Hardcastle, in 'She stoops to conquer;' Sir Antony Absolute, in 'The Rivals;' Frogrum, in 'The Slave;' Bonus, in 'Laugh when you can;' Wilford, in 'The Iron Chest;' and Gratiano, in 'The Merchant of Venice.'

In January 1819, the Greenwich Theatre was

opened by Saville Faucit. Here, in this small theatre, Mrs. Faucit, of Covent Garden, appeared, when not engaged in her professional duties at the national house. Not only the highly-talented wife of the manager assisted at the suburban theatre, but many other distinguished artists occasionally lent their services to give *éclat* to the sterling tragedies and comedies so much relished by the people of an age gone by.

A short time before this, 'Rob Roy' was produced at Covent Garden; and as Saville Faucit was attached to that establishment, and personated a character in the Scottish drama, he was fully capable of superintending its production in his own theatre. Individually, I acknowledge the advantage I received by his instructions in Baillie Nicol Jarvie, as he vividly laid before me the brilliant and unapproachable delineation of the great original Liston. The characters were filled by the following performers in the Greenwich Theatre:

<i>Rob Roy</i>	.	.	.	Bonnel Thornton.
<i>Rashleigh</i>	.	.	.	Barton.
<i>Francis</i>	.	.	.	Short.
<i>Sir F. Vernon</i>	.	.	.	Lewis.
<i>Captain Thornton</i>	.	.	.	Sam Keene.
<i>Dougal</i>	.	.	.	Joseph Laurence.
<i>Galbraith</i>	.	.	.	Starmer.
<i>Baillie Nicol Jarvie</i>	.	.	.	Donaldson.
<i>Helen Macgregor</i>	.	.	.	Mrs. Faucit.

Diana Mrs. Barnard.
Mattie Miss Stubbs.
Rob Roy's Children . Masters Saville Faucit.

One of those babes became popular at the Surrey, and the other *child* is now the comic old man at the Whitechapel Theatre.

The Samuel Keene, in the bill for Captain Thornton, is brother to the editor of the *Bath Journal*, and has been located many years in New York as a professor of music, and known in that city as *Paddy Keene*.

The original Rob Roy of Greenwich, Bonnel Thornton, was grandnephew to the translator of 'Plautus,' and connected in literature with the elder Colman.

The Rashleigh of Barton deserves notice. This talented tragedian's fame reached the management of Covent Garden in 1820; and such an opinion was entertained of him that he was intrusted with *Icilius*, in the tragedy of 'Virginius,' then in rehearsal.

This was caused by C. Kemble's ill-health; and fears were entertained that he might be rendered incapable of the task, when the night arrived, of enacting the youthful *Icilius*. Unfortunately for the actor, this middle-aged but talented tragedian became convalescent, and the juvenile aspirant, with all his youth and fire, missed the

chance, and had to retire to the provinces. Barton crossed the Atlantic, and became the leading actor at New Orleans.

Miss Cushman received her first instructions from this gentlemanly actor; and in the course of years he returned to Europe, and settled down as a professor of elocution at Bristol, where he died in 1848, sincerely lamented.

Short, the Francis Osbaldiston at Greenwich, was the original Giovanni at the Surrey; but not long after this, poor Short lost his voice, and returned to his native town of Bath, where he died.

The Dougal Creature, Joseph Lawrence, was the son of the player of the second fiddle at Astleys, and nephew of Grimaldi, after whom he was called.

When I say the Helen Macgregor was Mrs. Faucit, that is sufficient to assure those who have witnessed her splendid abilities, that the character could not fail to satisfy critical judgment.

In regard to the Glasgow baillie Nicol Jarvie, there is still living in the Dramatic College a very aged actor, Stormer, who has many a time and oft given a favourable opinion of its delineation.

In those primitive days, the actors of the large houses used often to cheer the suburban towns of the metropolis with their talent. Here, in the little theatre at Greenwich, I have acted with Downton, Gattie, Harley, Emery, Tokely, J. Russell, Charles

Connor, Knight, Fitzwilliam, Incledon, Webb; and in this locality Planché, the talented writer, made his *début* in a comic sketch, called 'The Actor of all Work,' in which he represented several characters, and gave an imitation of Talma.

This literary character had serious thoughts of taking the comic *rôle*; but what he witnessed at Greenwich, and at other small theatres, recalled his reason to his distracted brain, and the mania was repudiated.

The late Mrs. Warner made her *début*, at the age of fourteen, in the Greenwich Theatre on her father's benefit, and recited 'The Battle of Minden.' Her father, Huddart, began his career in Dublin, and was the original Rolla, while George Frederick Cooke sustained the second-rate part of Pizarro; Cooke, the master-spirit of his day, playing an inferior *rôle* to one not his equal in talent. Not only was he obliged to appear as the Spanish leader, but on the production of 'The Castle Spectre' in Dublin, he was the aged prisoner Reginald, a character always given to a third-rate actor; yet two years after this, in 1800, Cooke appeared at Covent Garden in Richard, and was declared the first tragedian in the kingdom. Such are the vicissitudes of an actor's life in the provinces, where real merit is generally kept in the background.

About this period, in 1819, I made my *début*

at the Old Haymarket Theatre, in O'Keefe's beautiful operatic farce of 'The Poor Soldier,' as Dermot; but as it was to oblige a brother actor on his benefit-night, I attempted a part rendered at that time famous by Incledon's execution of 'Sleep on, my Kathleen,' and 'The Brown Jug.'

Mordaunt, *alias* Captain Macnamara, father of Mrs. Nesbit, threw himself annually as a *bénéficiaire* on the notice of the public at the Haymarket Theatre. On one of those occasions I appeared as Willoughby in Reynolds's excellent comedy of 'The Dramatist.'

This respectable comedian, Mordaunt, always commanded an elegant and crowded assemblage in consequence of his family connection. His talent as a light-comedy actor, to judge by his performance of Vapid, was certainly not equal to that of Elliston's, but still it was above mediocrity; and it was his instruction that formed that accomplished actress, Mrs. Nesbit, and paved the way to that proud position which she attained in the metropolis.



CHAPTER V.

Reading Circuit—Anecdote of Thornton the Manager—Stockton—Emley—Weymouth in its palmy days—George the Third's nightly Visit to the little Theatre—The King's kindly consideration towards a poor Actor—Novel way of erecting a Theatre—The Nottingham Circuit under Manly and Robertson—'Beggars and Ballad-singers'—Salaries in the Nottingham Circuit—Wrench—Exchange of Lovers—Eccentric Conduct of Manly—Anecdote of Webb and Davis—A Theatrical Challenge—An Actor's sense of Honour.

THE old managers were celebrated for their wit and humour. Thornton, of the Reading circuit, was not the least among them: he was an especial favourite with George III. as an actor. Thornton was particularly happy in getting through a character without knowing much of the words of the author; but, in consequence of being absent at times, he committed strange blunders in some of his tragic attempts. One night at Gosport, while representing Biron in the tragedy of 'Isabella,' he died without giving the letter which unravels the plot; and as he lay prostrate in the last scene, one of the performers on the stage whispered to him, "Mr. Thornton, the letter—the letter!" Thorn-

ton then rose up, took the letter out of his bosom, and said, "One thing I had forgot through a multiplicity of business. Give this letter to my father: it will explain all;" and lay down again in the arms of death.

On Easter Monday 1819 I made my *début* at the Stockport Theatre, then under the management of John Stanton, the acknowledged best scenic artist in the provinces. Although capable of taking the first position at either of the metropolitan theatres, he preferred to lord it over the actors in his own establishment.

While the war was rife, Stanton, like all the other managers, put money in his purse; but when the peace arrived, and the man that took all the powers of Europe to subdue fell to rise no more, Stanton fell also, and an upright and honourable manager was lost to the profession.

I met in Stanton's company a truly versatile actor, John Emley, whose farcical attempts would stand the test of a metropolitan audience in these days, and whose vocal ability, either as a tenor or in burlesque, elicited from the judicious the warmest applause; and to crown all these accomplishments, he possessed a handsome person, and ability to lead an orchestra. That such a man should not succeed may appear a marvel; yet he did not, but sank in a few years into perfect obscurity.

Success does not always depend on merit. Family connection has more to do with the advancement of the aspirant than absolute talent; for only let one member get on, and the brothers, sisters, and sons are sure to be placed on the list of histrionics in some Theatre Royal.

Emley was attached to the Whitehaven Theatre while the father of Mrs. Glover—Betterton—was manager. During a starring engagement of that celebrated actress in this northern locality, Emley's acting attracted her notice, and she undertook to be his advocate with the management of Drury Lane; but when an engagement was the result of this gifted woman's application, he had steered for another locality, and received the letter too late.

During the Knutsford races, a gentleman connected with the House of Commons (Peter Finnerty, mentioned in the 'Life of Curran') who witnessed Emley's performance of Squire Groom, in 'Love à la Mode,' was so struck by his superior talent that, on his arrival in London, he named him to Charles Kemble, and the consequence was, the offer of an engagement; but here too Fate worked against him; and when this second dawn of good fortune burst on him, Emley was prostrate on a bed of sickness.

Pierce Egan's celebrated drama of 'Tom and Jerry' was produced at the Queen's Theatre in

Manchester, in 1822, and by my instrumentality Emley was engaged to personate Jerry, and by his brilliant and vivid delineation of the part became the greatest favourite in the theatre; so much so that even in these days his memory is rife among the aged. Notwithstanding all his popularity and abilities, he perished in obscurity, surrounded by a numerous family; proving that something besides genius is necessary to reach eminence.

Mrs. Emley, an actress of no mean pretensions, was a daughter of the brilliant author of the comedy of 'Wild Oats,' John O'Keefe, and related by marriage to Mackay, the original Baillie Nicol Jarvie in Edinburgh.

The low comedian under Stanton at Stockport was one Goddard, who in his day was an especial favourite with George III. at Weymouth.

In those times the King every summer visited this beautiful watering-place. Nor did his majesty remain in his unpretending house on the esplanade in the cool of the evening. No: he attended, with his retinue, the little theatre, and made himself as much at ease as if seated in the national house of Covent Garden.

On one occasion, having to open Parliament, his majesty was preparing for his departure. The very day he was to start was Goddard's benefit, and as the King was a tower of strength on such an oc-

casion his absence would entail a heavy loss on the unfortunate actor. Goddard screwed up his courage, and at once waited on his majesty. An audience was granted, and when the comedian had stated the purport of his errand, the King, in the kindest manner, told him not to make himself unhappy—that he would remain and attend the theatre. This is a well-known fact. His Majesty performed the journey at night, sooner than be the means of inflicting an injury on a poor country actor. Goddard was a native of Birmingham, and began as an amateur actor in the same little theatre with Richard Jones. Each member of this club brought his contribution in kind, in order for the getting up of the theatre—one nails, another paper for the scenery. Jones, being the son of a timber-merchant, generally dropped in with a scantling under his arm. So in this humble beginning these young men, Goddard and Richard Jones, started in life with equal requisites for the histrionic art. Goddard kept floundering about from one petty theatre to another; and at last, in 1819, I met him aged, broken down, surrounded by a family, and hopeless; while Jones was the leading comedian of Covent Garden, with a fortune in the funds, and a reputation of the first rank in his line of characters. But then Jones got attached, in his early struggles, to the best theatre out of London,

and he was wise enough to remain there till the proper time arrived to change, and a fair field lay open for him in the metropolis.

It is not talent always that shapes a man's destiny: it is manœuvring and working—not on the stage, but off it. Trickery and bounce have a deal to do in it. Without question Jones deserved his good fortune; and poor Goddard's ill fortune may be ascribed to circumstances over which he had no control.

Goddard's Geoffrey Muffincap, in Peake's excellent farce of 'Amateurs and Actors,' I have not seen equalled—not even by the original at the Lyceum. Such simple characters, it is true, are easy; but in Old Rapid, Sir Abel Handy, and many others in which Munden excelled, I have not met with any actor to be compared to him.

The Peace did not bring those blessings so fondly anticipated, and instead of bettering the condition of the working-classes in Lancashire, thousands were thrown out of employment, which brought on absolute insurrection. The drama, of course, suffered, and Stanton became a ruined man. When a manager is about to fail, the actors generally abandon him; as rats take to the water when a ship is foundering and swim for their lives; so Stanton was left alone in his ruin, and sank to rise no more. Being an honest and straight-

forward man, he was free from those tricks and artifices to which others too often resort to prop their reeling fortunes.

The fate of actors, like statesmen, depends on those in power; but when the tide turns, and a reverse comes, then a new scene of action is necessary; and this scene I found in the neat and compact town of Stamford, under the direction of Manly and Robertson. 'Hamlet' was performed on the opening night, in which his majesty of Denmark, Claudius, was sustained by the writer of these Recollections; while the Prince was represented by a young gentleman, Thomas Serle, since well known in the literary world; and the Queen by Mrs. Sheppard, aunt of Helen Faucit.

Robertson the manager could write a comic song, paint a scene, dance a hornpipe, and do the low comedy. In the latter department he was a prodigious favourite in the Nottingham circuit. This I ascribe to long standing. I have known many comic actors great favourites, having no claim to distinction beyond that of being several years before the public. Robertson's conception of such characters as Acres and Tony Lumkin was decidedly wrong. However, on the whole, I consider he was an actor of utility, and might be called a rough diamond. He was the author of a song, 'Beggars and Ballad-Singers,' that became po-

pular in London, Dublin, and in every part of the three kingdoms.

Jack Bannister, in the beginning of this century, paid Nottingham a starring visit; and having heard Robertson sing 'Beggars and Ballad-Singers,' that celebrated comedian requested a copy, as at this time it was not in type. Robertson readily obliged him. The following season at Drury Lane Bannister sang Robertson's song; and what words could describe Jemmy's surprise when he beheld the words and music of 'Beggars and Ballad-Singers' published, and Bannister's name inserted as the author? He could get no redress, although he agitated in the affair.

This was almost as bad as George Colman, when manager of the Haymarket, taking out the principal character of a new farce sent for perusal, 'Caleb Quotem,' and introducing it into the farce of 'The Review;' and when the author—Lee, manager of the Taunton circuit—complained of the robbery, Colman had the effrontery to tell him he was a bad writer and a worse friend, not to be grateful for the compliment paid him. Certainly Lee's character, Caleb Quotem, is the wittiest in 'The Review.'

The London manager, like the London actor, has too often his clique of literary friends to bring him through any difficulty.

Jemmy Robertson's song of 'Beggars and Ballad-Singers' is mentioned in the Life of that noble statesman, George Canning. It says:—"When George Canning was at college, one of the students, a son of the Dean of Salisbury, was remarkably fat, and Canning parodied 'Beggars and Ballad-Singers' on him:

There's a difference to be seen
'Twixt a bishop and a dean,
And the reason I'll tell you why—
A dean cannot dish up
A dinner like a bishop,
Nor get such a fat sow as I, I, I,
Nor get such a fat sow as I.

The Original.

There's a difference to be seen
'Twixt a beggar and a queen,
And the reason I'll tell you why—
A queen cannot swagger,
Nor get drunk like a beggar,
Nor be half so happy as I, I, I,
Nor be half so happy as I.

Robertson retired from the theatre, and opened a shop in Nottingham, where he sold all sorts of articles, and placed over his door the following legend in large letters, "Every thing made here except a fortune."

Manly continued the management on his own account, and made a rule never to engage married or old people. This was politic, as the walking in

this circuit (I kept an account of it) in one year amounted to 500 miles. Coaching in those days was no trifling matter, and salaries being on the lowest scale, actors were obliged to walk. There was one aged man in the company, Earle, and he had been a member forty-four years. He was originally a barber, and *cut* the hair for the "stage," thinking it was more aristocratic. By great parsimony he saved a sum of money, which he deposited in a banker's hands in Stamford. The Peace came, and the banker broke, and Earle's savings were lost; yet still he kept up his spirits, and walked his journeys; but this task he executed alone, as company was likely to drift into expense: all actors, he well knew, in their journeys through life, lived well on the road.

Certainly the means afforded by the manager did not allow of much indulgence either in eating or drinking. The salaries were 1*l.* 1*s.* weekly, and for this miserable stipend the actor had to find boots, shoes, buckles, silk stockings, hats, feathers, swords, canes, wigs, modern dress, long hose, gloves, military costume; and those that unfortunately possessed vocal ability, were obliged to furnish the part of their songs for the orchestra; and all these articles out of a guinea a week!

The actor that could sing was ever in request for glees, choruses, and even compelled to sing

the songs of other characters, when certain performers were incompetent. At Nottingham, for instance, O'Keefe's opera of 'The Castle of Andalusia' was performed. The writer of this represented Spado; and as the captain of the banditti, Don Cæsar, was not blessed with vocal power, had to sing his songs of 'Flow, thou regal purple stream,' and 'The Wolf.'

Have such services ever been beneficial? Quite the contrary. The actor that is useful is always considered a hack, and treated accordingly.

I have named 'The Castle of Andalusia.' I give every praise to the manager of the Haymarket for the revival of this beautiful opera. It is a proof he has seen and heard something. Such music in these days would be truly refreshing in our operas. If those who have questioned his judgment in bringing out this splendidly-written work of O'Keefe's had been in existence half a century back, they might have been in the same position in regard to judgment as Mr. Buckstone.

There is an idea among some modern writers that the dramatic literary characters of the last age should be for ever consigned to the tomb of the Capulets; but we have numerous enlightened characters that hold a contrary opinion, and well know when the judgment's weak, the prejudice is strong. When the comedies or operas of the days

of Goldsmith or Sheridan are brought forward, their effects on the audience fully testify their sterling and legitimate worth. But the rage for French dramas, ill-adapted and ill-rendered, has got so much in vogue, that the writings of Sheridan, Colman, O'Keefe, the elder Morton, and Holcroft, are considered "stale, flat, and unprofitable." So much for modern taste.

Wrench, the original in several characters at the Adelphi, began his career at Nottingham. So awkward and spiritless was this comedian, that the general remark was, he must have been mad to think of the stage; yet this actor became a popular man at the Adelphi Theatre and at the Lyceum.

At the period of Wrench's probation at Nottingham, a Mrs. Taylor, an actress of talent, had a share in the management, and Manly and Wrench paid their addresses to her and Miss Taylor, her daughter. Manly was the adorer of the mother, and Wrench of the young lady. What then was the astonishment of every one to find an exchange of sweethearts take place, Manly marrying the daughter, and Wrench the mother! The latter union was not a blissful one. Manly's Shylock was certainly the very best I have seen, with the exception of Kean's. The tremendous scene with Tubal was beyond all conception.

It was the opinion of several judges, particu-

larly Henry Johnston and William Blanchard, that Manly's Major O'Flaherty was a more brilliant piece of acting than that of Jack Johnstone's. I considered that myself; but Manly repudiated all that eternal twisting about on the stage, grinning and bustle, which London comedians resort to, in order to make the points, as they call them, when at the same time they render themselves ridiculous in the eyes of persons of discrimination.

Manly, well knowing his drawbacks for a London audience, wisely determined to remain in his own charming money-getting circuit, where he contrived to fill his *own* purse, quite regardless of those who laboured in his vineyard. Yet with all his *screwing* propensities, he had good qualities. He paid what he agreed for; he instructed the young actor in his profession, and where there was any dawning of genius, he encouraged it. No man on the stage understood the mysteries of the art better than Thomas Wilson Manly. That he was a dramatic despot, there is no denying, and a terror to those *novices* whom agents sent to fill the positions of experienced actors—his *hard bargains*, as he called them. Although a splendid actor himself, he studiously kept his children from the stage. One he articed to a lawyer, and another to a doctor. His daughters he trained for first-class governesses. And well knowing the estima-

tion the dramatic profession is *unjustly* held in by a section of society not celebrated for sense, judgment, or liberality, he determined his offspring should steer clear down the stream of life unruffled by the quicksands of bigotry and malice and all uncharitableness.

In this course of proceeding his well-wishers saw wisdom and forethought, and commended the sagacious manager; but who can control fate, and divert man from his destiny? No one. Manly's son, the young doctor, threw physic to the dogs, and rushed on the stage; the other repudiated Coke and Blackstone for Shakespeare and Sheridan; and one of his daughters, that he had designed for an earl or viscount, united her fate with an actor. These galling disappointments worked on a high and ambitious spirit, and in time undermined a well-knit frame and physical power of no common order, and brought him with sorrow to the grave.

When the Nottingham circuit lost the pilotage of the man who had guided it for so many years with success, it fell, and became disjointed, and split into sections.

In Manly's day the towns were often cheered by the talent of such stars as Miss O'Neill, Edmund Kean, Braham, Dowton, Munden, Emery, William Blanchard, Macready, C. Kemble, and J. Brutus

Booth. I have performed with nearly the whole of those stars in Nottingham. No twinkling of provincial celebrity such as we have glittering about as stars in these days were then tolerated in the humblest provincial locality. It must be a Kean or nothing. Even such an accomplished tragedian as Charles Young failed in Southampton to attract an audience.

The London stars who visited Nottingham Manly generally invited to his table, not through a spirit of hospitality, but through a spirit of contention, to see if they were really as great in conversational powers as they were on the stage. He has declared many a time that he was thunder-struck with surprise to find they were so little acquainted with historical affairs, either of the ancient or modern times. Nothing but the theatre and acting were in their mouths, nor could he lead them into any other subject. Manly himself was educated in an eminent degree, and possessed a knowledge of state affairs superior to any manager I have met with. I thought at the time he was the very man to take the helm in a land like America, where boldness, determination, and a broad and expansive intellect lead to great results. He certainly was in too circumscribed a sphere of action, directing a small and trifling affair like a provincial theatre.

Braham paid a starring visit to Nottingham, and was announced for his original character in 'The Devil's Bridge,' Count Belino. In the course of the rehearsal of the music, he sent for the manager, and told him "he could not sing with the orchestra; that it was execrable." "Execrable!" exclaimed Manly. "Sir, it is universally admired, and considered first-rate." "No matter," replied Braham; "I shall have a piano on the stage, and accompany my own songs." This Braham actually did, and he was perfectly right, for Manly was not blessed with an ear for music, and to him good or bad fiddling was equally agreeable. During Braham's engagement another London star appeared, rather premature and before required. This was Lucius Junius Brutus Booth. An action-at-law was the result of this engagement, and Booth was non-suited. For he, although the son of a lawyer, and initiated into the mysteries of the legal profession, was not a match for the sagacious manager.

In the dramatic art it is possible for a novice to jump at once into a distinguished position, without going through the drudgery of provincial theatres, where the actor is ill paid and hard worked. Webb, called Paddy Webb, the Irish comedian and melodist, was one of those fortunate men who realised a fortune and gained a name by

one step—from a hatter's shop in the Borough to the stage of Covent Garden. This was on the occasion of John Emery's benefit. His singing of Whitaker's splendid song of 'Paddy Carey' enabled Webb to throw himself on the notice of provincial managers as a star; and by pursuing a steady course of action, and making Jack Johnstone his model, he saved enough to retire upon. Webb's voice was harsh, but being a timist, and having a falsetto and shake, proved powerfully impressive with those who did not comprehend singing. The shake he always introduced at the end of every Irish melody. As a hatter in the Borough, he felt he was ordained for something, and cut the shop and "free-and-easies," which he constantly attended, for the sock and buskin. In one week, in Nottingham, Webb netted 130*l*. It was not by his acting, which was mechanical and decidedly bad, but by his singing. His songs were new, and arranged by those composers the late talented John Blewitt and Whitaker; and as the vocalist claimed them as his own property, he reserved to himself the right of publishing, consequently no other performer had a chance of opposing the original in these splendid melodies. However, by the kindness of the leader of the orchestra in Nottingham, I obtained the parts of five songs that gained the plaudits of some distinguished cities, not only in

England, but in such localities as Paris, Brussels, Rome, Naples, Malta, and Gibraltar.

Many have appeared before the public as Irish comedians with no other requisite than the *brogue*, when at the same time they were deficient in the most essential quality to portray a son of the Emerald Isle—*humour*. The actor who in his vigour was quite at home in the *walking gentleman* or in the *heavies*, can never possibly give vitality to a national character, notorious as the most joyous and original in the universe, “a real and unsophisticated Irishman.”

America has sent some actors to these shores, in order to raise a laugh, or set the theatre in a roar, at Irish blunders; but though the acting made the unskilful laugh, yet the judicious grieved to witness such futile attempts, devoid of both brogue and humour.

A kindly and talented leader in a country theatre has it in his power to assist the vocalist in an eminent degree. William Davies, of the Nottingham Theatre, was one of those musicians, ever prone to oblige, and during Webb's engagement paid marked attention to the Irish comedian; on the departure of this star, however, the leader met with a very indifferent return.

On taking leave of the actors, and of Davies in particular, Webb shook him cordially by the

hand, and placed in it something wrapt up in a bit of paper, saying: "Farewell, dear sir; I shall ever remember your attention to me, and in that bit of paper you will find something to drink my health—adieu."

On the exit of Webb, Davies began undoing the papers in which the coin was enclosed, expecting every second to come to the sovereign. But what words can paint his dismay and surprise, when he beheld a bright new shilling! Directly on the discovery he roared out to stop the liberal donor; but the bird had flown; and the enraged musician looked pretty much like the man who restored a popular comedian a lost trunk, that five pounds reward had been offered for, but instead of which met with a recompense of two shillings. "What is this?" exclaimed the man; "Sir, you said you would give five pounds reward." "Five pounds," roared out the son of Momus; "why, every thing in it arn't worth five shillings."

During the palmy days of the drama in Liverpool, when such men as Vandenhoff, Cooper, David Rees, James Browne, and Bass (not the brewer), were the exponents of the histrionic art, a London comedian made his appearance in one of his popular characters.

In the course of the performance, this said comedian grossly insulted Tom Power, a young

actor of versatility both as a vocalist and harlequin.

When Power retired to his lodgings, he penned a challenge to the haughty London luminary, and demanded satisfaction for his insulted honour; for, although moving in a humble sphere, he was the son of an Irish gentleman, and felt the indignity cast on him as keenly as if he had filled the proudest position in the theatre.

The London star, on reading this discontented letter, immediately hastened to a gentleman of eminence in Liverpool, and asked his advice in the affair.

This gentleman said: "My dear sir, you must meet him; as a man of honour and a gentleman, you cannot refuse to give him satisfaction."

"Fiddlesticks! and don't talk to me about honour and gentleman," exclaimed the comedian; "my father was only a tailor!"

"No matter what your father was," replied the gentleman; "you are one of the first in your profession, and cannot decline the meeting."

"Nonsense," answered the star; "only think of the difference of our positions. I am a man of wealth—courted and looked up to; while this poor wretch has not a sixpence to call his own. A bullet through his stupid head would relieve him from all his miseries; while in me it would entail

an irreparable loss to the drama and to society in general."

"But, then, your *honour*," urged the gentleman.

"Stuff!" exclaimed the comedian. "My dear sir, will you go to this fellow and offer an apology?"

In this manner the affair was amicably settled, and the insulted actor was invited to a supper at an adjacent tavern to the Theatre Royal, in Williamson's Square; the repast provided for the occasion consisting of *two Welsh-rabbits and a quart of ale*.

Power, in 1822, related this circumstance to me in Liverpool.

CHAPTER VI.

Liverpool—Dramatic privileges forty years ago—Banks and Lewis—Fatal Duel between Booth and Diavolo Antonio the Slack-wire Dancer—Lewis's munificent Gift to the Nation—Mrs. Glover's Hamlet—Southampton under Maxfield—Kelly and Collins—Sheridan Knowles—Mr. and Mrs. West—Maria, Ellen, and Ann Tree—Fawcett and Banister—The Young Roscius—Incedon's Farewell at Southampton; his meanness and vanity—Memoir of Dowton; his Address on Incedon's Retirement—Braham—Liston—Fawcett—Manchester—Elton—Stanfield—Memoir of David Bees.

IN the present age, lawyers are resorted to in order to define what is dramatic and what is not dramatic, as in the case of "The Alhambra and the theatres." Forty years ago, the managers who held patents settled these sort of things remarkably easy. In those days, no publican could fit up a stage, with or without scenery, under any pretence whatsoever. Consequently the rights of the drama were not encroached on; and, as in Paris at the present time, dancing and singing could only be practised on a stage within the walls of a regular theatre, licensed by the authorities.

Having performed under the direction of the managers of the Theatre Royal, Liverpool, Messrs.

Banks and Lewis, I am cognisant of the working of the old system, when patents were respected. It is true, patents were a monopoly; but it was a monopoly in a good cause, as it preserved the legitimate drama in all its bearings.

Now, in regard to Liverpool, no proprietor of a booth, no equestrian *troupe* could enter the town; and as this restriction was the means of keeping public attention on the Theatre Royal, the legitimate and classic works of the stage were year after year presented by an efficient and educated set of artists, more likely to elevate and advance society than the light and trifling performances of the present day, that may be regarded more in the light of amusements than carrying out Shakespeare's idea of "holding the mirror up to Nature."

The managers of Liverpool—Banks and Lewis—were men of note in society; the former had been for years a respected tragedian, and the latter son of the never-equalled comedian, Lewis of Covent Garden. Those men legislated in Liverpool for the legitimate and illegitimate drama. In the summer the Theatre Royal was the temple for tragedy and comedy, and in the winter the Olympic Theatre in Christian Street was the arena for equestrian exercises, melodramas, ballets, and pantomimes. In this amphitheatre, in 1820, I made

my bow as a vocalist, and gained some popularity by Blewitt's splendid melody of 'Katty O'Lynch.' Here I met with two Italian ladies—the Mademoiselle Ferzis—celebrated on the rope—not in the Blondin style; those aerial flights were never then attempted, save and except by the famous Madame Saqui.

Diavolo Antonio, a Portuguese slack-wire performer, was much noticed in Liverpool, both in his public capacity and in private circles. This gentlemanly man fell in a duel with Lucius Junius Brutus Booth.*

Tight-rope dancing was in great vogue in those days, and had the preference to the desperate and fatal ascents so attractive in these times. The daughters of Usher the clown danced on the double rope, and were universally admired for their elegance; and Wilson, another *artiste sur la corde*, met with general applause.

Although Liverpool at that day could not boast of half the population of the present time, yet the pure and legitimate drama flourished. But when the door of the temple of the immortal bard was left open, and one adventurer after another rushed into the town, the Theatre Royal—the scene of the triumphs of the Kembles, Keans, O'Neills, and

* This was the father of the late notorious John Wilkes Booth, the assassin of President Lincoln.

Vandenhoffs—was totally neglected, and extravaganza became the rage.

A futile attempt in the way of opposition, made by an old servant, induced the respective managers, Banks and Lewis, to give up the Olympic Theatre; and finally they retired from the town altogether, tired and disgusted with the ingratitude of those whose tastes they had fostered and encouraged.

Lewis—called “Dandy” Lewis—died some time ago, after his withdrawal from management, and left 15,000*l.* to the National Gallery, on condition that Sir Thomas Lawrence’s portrait of his father as the Marquis in the *petite* comedy of ‘The Midnight Hour’ should be hung up among the other pictures.

The breaking-up of the establishment in Christian Street was keenly felt by all who came under the management of such characters as Banks and Lewis; and no one parted from those honourable and respected men with greater regret than the writer of these Recollections.

On my arrival in London, in June 1822, I was enlisted to fill a *rôle* in the tragedy of ‘Hamlet’ at the Lyceum Theatre. Mrs. Glover assumed the part of the Prince of Denmark, and announced this extraordinary attempt as an attraction on her benefit-night.

This highly-gifted actress was not disappointed,

for the theatre was filled in every part. Her noble figure, handsome and expressive face, rich and powerful voice, all contributed to rivet the attention of the *élite* assembled on this occasion; while continued bursts of applause greeted her finished elocution as she delivered the soliloquies so well known to her delighted auditors. In the stage-box were seated Edmund Kean, Michael Kelly, Munden, and the Honourable Douglas Kinnaird. At the end of the first act Kean came behind the scenes and shook Mrs. Glover, not by one, but by both hands, and exclaimed, "Excellent! excellent!" The splendid actress, smiling, cried, "Away, you flatterer! you come in mockery to scorn and scoff at our solemnity!" Mrs. Glover was the daughter of an accomplished actor—Betterton—who sustained a superior line of characters at the Dublin Theatre and at Covent Garden; and Miss Betterton's mind was not left in fallow to pick up her education behind the scenes; but received in early life what all actresses should receive—a *liberal* education.

Betterton entered into management in his native country, Ireland, and also conducted several theatres in the north of England.

His son John Betterton was a good actor and dancer, but had an impediment in his speech. At night on the stage it did not affect his delivery;

while in common conversation he stuttered abominably.

While Betterton was travelling in a stage-coach with some gentlemen the conversation turned on stammering and the difficulty in curing it. One said, "There is a person in London (Mr. Bonham) who professes to do away with it." "That," cried another, "is an impossibility; so he must be an impostor." Betterton, roused to anger, exclaimed, "I-I-I know th-th-that gen-tle-man; he-he-he is no im-p-p-postor; it was un-un-der him I-I wa-wa-was cured."

In June 1822 I made my first appearance at the Theatre Royal Southampton, under the management of Messrs. Maxfield, Kelly, and Collins.

This beautiful town, with its romantic neighbourhood, was a fashionable watering-place long before the erection of its splendid docks, constructed at a cost of nearly a million sterling.

At this period His Royal Highness the Duke of Sussex paid a visit to Southampton, in order to preside at the installation of Sir Wm. de Crespigny, Bart., M.P. for the town. All the Masonic brethren of the county assembled, and a play was patronised by the highly-gifted and liberal-minded Prince, Grand-Master of England. The pieces were 'Guy Mannering' and Moncrieffe's excellent new farce of 'The Spectre Bridegroom.'

Mrs. Wm. West of Drury Lane was the Meg Merrilies, and Wm. West of the Haymarket represented Dickory in the new farce of 'The Spectre Bridegroom;' while Squire Auldwinkle gave the author of this work an opportunity—very rare in those days—of appearing before Royalty.

The Duke of Sussex was truly a dramatic character, like his august father, and at the end of the performance despatched Sir Wm. de Crespigny behind the scenes to express to the performers his approbation of the entertainments in general.

In 1822 Sheridan Knowles's tragedy of 'Virginius' was produced here for the first time, for the purpose of bringing Macready forward in his original character; and it met with great success.

This tragedian performed six nights, and 'on his benefit, after 'Damon and Pythias,' he appeared as Delaval in Kenny's *petite* comedy of 'Matrimony.'

It was reported, previous to Macready's visit to Southampton, that he was repulsive and disagreeable; but having played O'Clogherty with him in 'Matrimony,' I found him truly facile and pleasant.

Actors of ability who are anxious about the profession, and will take the trouble to direct rehearsals, are sure to displease some one.

This season Maria Tree made her first appearance at Southampton in the opera of 'Clari, or the

Maid of Milan;' a ballet originally at the Académie Royale, Paris, but transformed into an opera by Howard Payne, which, like others, he called his own. Ninette, in 'Clari,' a small character, was performed by Ellen Tree. This was her first appearance on any stage; the Vespina was played by Anne Tree, mother of the Miss Chapmans.

On Maria Tree's benefit the farce of 'The Rendezvous' was performed. Maria was cast for Sophia; Ellen Tree for Lucretia; and Anne Tree for Susan.

In 1823 Fawcett was engaged for a few nights, and made his *début* in Job Thornbury, his original part in 'John Bull,' and Caleb Quotem in the 'Review,' when I had the honour of representing Dennis Brulgruddery and Looney MacTwolter. It may truly be called an honour to appear with such an actor as Fawcett, for he stood quite alone in his original characters; and as a singer, never has any vocalist equalled him in the mock bravura of the Italian singer—'What's a woman like?' 'The Almanack-maker,' and Caleb Quotem. Fawcett was not a *tol-de-rol* singer or actor; his Captain Copp, Lingo, Rolando, Touchstone, and Sir John Falstaff, were unrivalled in his day; of course I cannot say any thing respecting the present period, as such characters are not often brought forward.

Fawcett retired in his latter days to the village

of Botley, near Southampton, celebrated for its dulness, and as once being the residence of William Cobbett.

I certainly cannot fall in with the idea of an actor so lively as Fawcett was to retire and end his days in solitude. Such localities may do for hermits, but are not in accordance with such merry souls as players. For myself, I should prefer the delicious spots about Drury Lane to the glen of the Downs or the Vale of Avoca, in the county in Ireland most celebrated for its romantic scenery—Wicklow.

Fawcett and Bannister were the great comedians of London, and were, of course, great rivals. When Fawcett made such an impression in the broken-hearted brazier Job Thornbury, Bannister at the Haymarket appeared in the same character, and met with but a poor reception.

The morning after the performance a friend called on Bannister, and the conversation turned, of course, on Job Thornbury. This gentleman observed: "The people considered, that in appearance and face, you are inferior to Fawcett."

"Why, yes," cries Jack, putting his hand to his chin, "Fawcett has the face of a brazier."

In those days, when London could boast of such dramatic talent, it was truly exhilarating to *come in collision* with the Fawcetts, Bannisters,

Downtons, and Listons — men gifted with such powers that they absolutely threw all the provincial aspirants into the shade. Those actors who had a just estimate of their own abilities kept their positions, thus displaying sense in the highest degree; while those who permitted themselves to be led away by flattering friends entered the lists of the metropolis against most extraordinary talent, and egregiously failed. I could name several whose premature end was hastened by their rashness in rushing before a London audience, but ill adapted for the onerous task attempted.

Mr. Henry West Betty—once the celebrated young Roscius—paid a starring visit to Southampton, and performed Charles in the play of 'The Royal Oak,' and displayed all the fire of his youth in this well-written historical drama by Dimond. His other characters were the Earl of Warwick and Achmet in 'Barbarossa;' and in each of which he elicited the most rapturous applause.

Perhaps in the kingdom there is not a more discriminating audience than that of Southampton. I have heard Edmund Kean say that his points were as well taken in Southampton as they were in London.

In 1824 Incledon took his farewell of the stage at the Southampton Theatre. The bill announced : — " Charles Incledon, styled by

George III. the British National Singer, is engaged for this evening only, and will sing four of his most celebrated songs. In 1784 Incledon made his first appearance on the stage in this town, and the plaudits which he received led the way to the metropolis, where he maintained a reputation never equalled by any vocalist in former years."

The songs which he sang on this occasion were, 'Black-eyed Susan,' 'Trim-built Wherry,' 'The Storm,' 'Sally in our Alley,' and 'Admiral Benbow.' The house was full, and, what appeared grateful to the heart of the veteran, the boxes were filled with the rank and fashion of the town. At the conclusion of the performance Incledon delivered the following address:—

"Ladies and gentlemen,—I return my most grateful thanks for this last mark of your esteem. This glorious assemblage will be dear to my heart as long as life remains. This is the ground from which I made the start forty years ago, and the fostering smiles and cheering plaudits of this refined and elegant town proved a passport to the metropolis of my native country. In the proud capital I was hailed with enthusiasm, and the Sovereign pronounced me the British National Singer. Every one present may not know what a *national singer* means. A national singer

is a mon* that can sing in *every* nation. I retire from public life with the consolation to my feelings that I never neglected my duty to my patrons. During my long career I have reared and educated a large family that are a blessing to me. In this arduous task I have been assisted by my darling wives—I have had three: the first was the sainted Jane; the second the angel Mary; and the third—still living—is the divine Martha. Now, ladies and gentlemen, the time has arrived to bid you farewell. Painful as it is, I am grieved to say it; but I pronounce the word—wishing you and yours health, prosperity, and many happy days—farewell.”

Incledon was an original and a general favourite among his brother actors. He was ever ready with a witty expression, and was rarely indeed seen out of humour.

The elder Mathews gave a first-rate imitation of Incledon; and although the great mimic's face was totally unlike the national singer's, yet it was difficult to tell, when seen together, which was Incledon and which was Mathews.

In 1812 they travelled through Ireland with a

* Incledon always called *man* “mon.” He was peculiar in the delivery of language, and, like Braham, indistinct and hurried; but in singing, every word was enunciated so clearly that he made the dullest comprehend his ballads. Mrs. Siddons said Stevens was a fine piece of acting.

joint entertainment. At one of those performances I was present, and witnessed Mathews's imitation of Incledon, which elicited screams of laughter and applause; and Incledon himself, who was present, was the loudest in his hilarity.

Edmund Kean's imitation of Incledon was splendid. If Mathews surpassed Kean in portraying the great national singer's face, the modern Roscius gave the melodies of Incledon as close and as delicious as Charles himself. Kean's voice was of a sweet quality, and when he represented Tom Tug at Drury Lane, in 1818, and sang 'The trim-built wherry,' he astonished and electrified the house.

There was another celebrated imitator of Incledon—James Russell, the comedian, of both Covent Garden and the Haymarket. Russell was the best singer of all the comedians, and was the person that originally sang the old Irish ballad, 'Rory O'More,' arranged by Sam Lover; and this composition has been erroneously ascribed to that versatile genius.

In 1811 Mathews, while in Dublin, imitated Incledon in Captain Macheath. At this time the bold outlaw was not dressed in the costume of the opera. Incledon dressed the Captain in frock-coat, buckskin breeches, top-boots, coloured vest, and several yards of cambric round his neck. This

costume gave a better idea of the character than that of the days of Jack Sheppard; but the dress in the condemned cell, worn fifty years ago, was out of all character—black coat, breeches, black stockings, pumps, white necktie, and large opera- or cocked-hat. It was in this dress that Mathews appeared on the Crow Street stage; and although he was much taller than Incledon, the whole house were astonished at the likeness as Matthews walked forward with the great hat on his head and his bow-legs in imitation of the renowned singer's limbs.

Many versions have been published respecting Incledon's early days, but the account which I shall give may be relied on as authentic. I had it from one of the managers of Southampton—Maxfield—who was a native of the same town where Incledon was born—Callinton, on the borders of Cornwall, and celebrated for its manganese. Incledon was the son of humble parents, and was admitted, at the age of fourteen, as a singing boy in Exeter Cathedral. Here he remained two years, and received tuition from Jackson the composer.

At the age of sixteen he entered on board a man-of-war at Plymouth, and sailed up the Mediterranean, where his ship was engaged in an action with the enemy.

In 1784 his ship was paid off at Chatham, and young Incledon then thought of his home, and commenced his journey for his native Devon. On reaching Hitchen Ferry, near Southampton, fortunately he was penniless, and had to remain sometime till a Samaritan approached in the shape of a recruiting serjeant with his aspirants for military renown.

The serjeant soon franked the young sailor across, and on entering the town, the party adjourned to a public-house in French Street, where they sat down and made themselves merry over some Salisbury ale. The song and toast went round, and in his turn the young sailor sang a ballad. There happened to be seated in the chimney-corner, smoking his pipe, the prompter of the theatre. Ere Incledon had finished his song, the prompter hastened to Collins, the manager. Collins, who had always an eye to business, very soon returned with his prompter, and on the repetition of Incledon's vocal powers, an engagement at *half-a-guinea a-week* was offered and accepted; and Incledon made his *début* at the age of eighteen, 1784, in the Theatre of Southampton. The wife of one of the managers, Mrs. Kilby, was a Miss Collins, and sung a duet with him on his first appearance; and this lady was in the Southampton

Theatre, in 1824, when Incledon made his final bow on his retirement into private life.

Incledon's probation in Hampshire was only a few months, when he entered into a larger field for his extraordinary powers. This was Bath. Rauzzini, an Italian master of repute, was the leading musician of this fashionable locality, and he it was that refined and improved the young sailor boy, who on bursting on a metropolitan public at Covent Garden, entirely eclipsed every singer—Italians and all—at that time before the public. Never was such a voice heard before; and never has such a voice been heard since.

While his powers remained, he kept his position at Covent Garden, but the moment that age and infirmity crept on him, the management most ungratefully dismissed the man who had spent his vigour in their service. So stung were the London actors at this treatment, that they rallied round their favourite, took the Opera House, and got up a benefit before he crossed the broad ocean to try his fortune among his transatlantic brethren in the West, in 1817.

Dowton, Incledon's firm and attached friend, delivered the following address on that occasion, in his usual brilliant style :

"The tuneful favourite of your youthful days,
Rear'd by your smiles and nurtured by your praise,

Whom you proclaimed from competition free,
Unrivalled in his native minstrelsy—
Now forced, alas ! to foreign climes to roam,
And seek beyond the Atlantic wastes a home,
Ere yet to England's shores he bids adieu,
Pours forth one parting grateful strain to you.
Oh ! let the men who with him trod the stage,
Who mark'd the promise of his earlier age,
Who saw with joy his talents ripen—bloom,
Who hail'd his promise and now mourn his doom,
Shed for such talents lost, the pitying tear,
While yet you may behold him here—
Here, where the friends who view'd his youthful power,
Now meet to consecrate his *farewell* hour—
Here, where the plaudits he has heard so long,
Now for the *last* time cheer 'the child of song ;'
No actors here as *actors* now attend,
But *friends* assembled to *support* a friend.
Those friends would waft above one fervent prayer,
One anxious wish for him who claims their care.
May *he*, in lands where British accents sound,
Experience *what* he has felt on British ground ;
While to his *ear* their language they impart,
Oh ! may they speak your language to his heart ;
May all the social joys which here exist,
There wait upon the *Wandering Melodist !*"

In 1824, Dowton paid a visit to Southampton, and made his *début* in his unrivalled character of Dr. Cantwell, in Bickerstaff's comedy of 'The Hypocrite.' The delineation of this part was considered by profound judges the most perfect piece of acting in comedy ever witnessed. Yet Dowton

was not a lucky star, like his great rival Joey Munden, who in his starring tours travelled with some wretched trash of a farce, dished up for the simpletons, and a couple of new songs in the tol-de-rol style, that were sure to please the million and get the money. What was the result of this wise proceeding? Why, that Munden died a wealthy man, while Dowton, superior in understanding and genius, died not worth a groat.

I have had the honour of representing the splendidly-drawn rôle of Mawworm with Dowton, and can speak artistically of his superiority over every other actor that has attempted this *chef-d'œuvre* of Bickerstaff. Dowton's face, manner, and delivery were so truly in keeping with nature, that an auditor could hardly imagine he was looking on any but the thing itself, so wonderfully Dowton conceived and executed this most difficult character. During his stay in Southampton, he played Sir Antony Absolute, Sir Peter Teazle, Sir David Dunder, and Sir John Falstaff in 'Henry the Fourth.' It has ever been said that the delineation of the Fat Knight is a sure test of an actor's talent. Since the days of Henderson, the manager Maxfield, who had seen that great man, declared he had never witnessed any one that in the slightest degree approached Dowton in Sir John.

In 1825, Charles Young, William Farren, Edmund Kean, Liston, and Braham appeared at Southampton and Portsmouth. Such stars in these primitive days enlightened the dull monotony of a provincial circuit, and often tended to drive the aspirant away to another quarter in hopes of bettering his fortune; but very often a change is *not* for the better.

Managers are frequently the means of driving an established favourite from a circle of friends who have gathered round him. This line of conduct generally proceeds from "envy by the gods!"

In this manner the managers of Southampton, Portsmouth, Winchester changed and changed, and when they were blessed with talent, they did not appreciate it, but were content to jog on any how, and never considered that those towns were increasing in population, in knowledge, in every thing; and that the establishment that satisfied in the days of George III. was not calculated for the times of William IV.; the natural consequence of such proceeding was bankruptcy and ruin; the property got into the clutches of the law, and the managers fell from their high estate down to a very low estate.

In the summer of 1825, I made my first appearance at the Queen's Theatre, Manchester, *under the management* of the elder Nadin, ex-

bailliff of the town. Montague Corri acted as stage-manager and musical director, and Elton was the principal in tragedy.

Elton met with a similar fate to Tyrone Power, near Holy Island, in his passage from Leith to London, and left a numerous family to mourn his loss; and James Bywater, a vocalist of extraordinary power, of the Queen's Theatre, in the prime of life, sunk into an early grave in consequence of the upsetting of a boat at North Shields.

The scenic artist of the Manchester Theatre, Stanfield—not the great painter of that name, but his brother—displayed abilities in the art of no common order. This young man, according to the opinion of several of judgment, bid fair to rival his brother, but it was ordered otherwise. A few years brought his earthly career to a close. It may appear singular, but during my peregrinations, I have come in contact with the two Stanfields, Grieve, Telbin, and Beverley, before they reached their metropolitan position.

J. F. Smith, son of the Norwich manager, made his *debut* in Manchester, with considerable success. Since that time he has wisely abandoned acting, and devoted his attention to literature. This is the popular author of 'Woman and her Master.'

The principal comedian at the Manchester

Theatre Royal at this period was David Rees. This actor not only sustained Liston's line of characters, but, after Dowton, was the best Justice Woodcock, Old Hardcastle, and Sir Antony Absolute on the stage. In consequence of a misunderstanding, he left the Manchester and Liverpool circuit, and crossed the Atlantic in the hope of bettering his fortune in the New World.

His *début* in New York was successful, even beyond his expectations, as he some years afterwards acquainted me. In a few nights he became quite the rage, and a brilliant career was about to dawn on him, which was entirely crushed, as a casualty which befel the unfortunate comedian maimed him for life. One day, quite buoyant in spirits, he engaged a horse of first quality, and mounted in order to proceed up the Broadway; but it appeared the way was too narrow for this fiery charger, for he ran against a house and was killed, while poor Rees fell to the ground and lay insensible with both legs broken. For six months he was prostrate by this serious accident in a strange land.

How many similar accidents have occurred from the same cause! Horses are very knowing, and are very tenacious in respect to the rider. If he is an amateur, his fate is certain, and a broken leg or a broken neck may be anticipated.

At length Rees returned to England, and met with such medical skill at the Shampooing Baths in Brighton, that he was enabled to cast aside his crutches and hobble about with other invalids. Mr. Calcraft, the manager of the Theatre Royal, Dublin, offered him an engagement, and Rees made his *debut* in Sir Peter Teazle, lame as he was, and became the greatest favourite in the theatre.

In 1840, he appeared at the Haymarket, in 'Paul Pry,' with complete success. The papers all declared it was the nearest approach to Liston possible; nay, the Liverpool, Manchester, and Dublin people went so far as to say "he surpassed the original." At the end of three years' engagement he returned to the country which he loved, and was doomed never to leave it more, for he was seized with a fit of apoplexy in Cork, and thus the stage lost the only successor to Farren and Liston. Rees was one of my oldest and most valued friends. I had known and enjoyed his friendship for twenty-four years in Lewes, Eastbourne, Liverpool, Dublin, and in London. At the time that Rees left Manchester, he left a gap which the managers found it difficult to fill up. They looked about in vain for a successor.

Frederick Fromow, of the Nottingham Theatre, conceived he was capable of entering the lists, and accordingly was engaged as the successor of

Davy Rees. Alas! Fromow—for I knew him well—was the antipodes to Rees in person and acting. Fromow had a meagre attenuated figure, with a thin face and a thinner voice; while Rees was fat, jolly, and plump, with a broad face and broader voice, and blessed with a chuckle that always set the theatre in a roar. Then too Fromow was always accustomed to theatres not the calibre of Manchester or Liverpool; and acting in a small house and in a large one is quite a different thing.

Fromow made his *debut* in Manchester, in ‘Baillie Nicol Jarvie,’ and most egregiously failed. This had such an effect on him that he retired to Sunderland and died of a broken heart.

Fromow was a versatile actor. I have seen him play Lear with great judgment, but nature had deprived him of the *physique* for such an arduous character; then his Lord Ogleby—a *rôle* beyond comic old men in general—I have not seen any one but William Farren that surpassed him.

Fromow was not devoid of vocal powers, and I say his Don Giovanni was above mediocrity; so I think the Manchester people were premature in their decision. An actor has many trials and many vicissitudes to undergo; and for one who spends a youth of labour with an age of ease and

comfort, twenty sink into an early grave, or into what is worse, insignificance and contempt.

During my second season in Manchester, the elder Nadin, a gentleman who had an esteem for me, made a proposal which, if accepted, a fortune was to be realised in ten years. This was to abandon the stage, and be installed in a public-house in Deansgate—well frequented, well situated, and well stocked in every particular. This was declined, as I have ever observed the fatal results of actors casting aside the sock and buskin for the spigot, and eternal temptations attending on such a position. No; I was determined to tempt my fate a little longer and make a soar to the Far West across the Atlantic; a country which I was often assured was the land for a vocalist, and the representation of those characters of Ireland that demand humour and spirit; in fact, that demand an actor.

Amherst's grand melodrama of 'The Burning of Moscow' was performed in Manchester forty nights; a great run in those days. An attempt at a longer period would have been detrimental to the best interests of the theatre, being an absolute liberty, and an attempt at playing on the feelings of the public, which liberty the public ought always to resist.

CHAPTER VII.

Bristol—'Mother Goose'—Bradbury the Clown—Liston—Sunderland—Stephen Kemble—The original Jem Baggs—Rayner—The African Roscius—Hamlet and Othello's dress in Garrick's time—Newcastle—Sam Butler—Kean as Harlequin in 'Mother Goose'—Windsor Theatre—Benjamin Webster as the Low Comedian—M. Laurent, Director of the Italian Opera—Speculation of the English Dramatic Company in Paris—List of the Company engaged, with the Salaries given—Miss Smithson—Terry, Abbot, Miss Foote, Bond, Charles Mason, &c.—Italian Opera at Paris—Malibran—Rossini—Balfe—The *Claqueurs* of the French Theatre—Michael Kelly—The French Stage in 1828—Reflections on Edmund Kean's acting of Richard, Othello, Shylock, and Macbeth—Honours paid to Charles Kean—Presentation of Plate.

AFTER two seasons spent pleasantly among a people that ever cheered and encouraged my efforts, I bade adieu to the great commercial town, and in 1826 entered another—the city of Bristol—where I made my *debut* with the elder Mathews in Moncrieff's farce of 'Monsieur Tonsen.' This establishment was under the management of Macready, father to the tragedian.

Here, after many roving years, I met Ellar, the Kean of all the Harlequins, whose agile delineation of the motley hero I have never seen equalled.

In 1809 Bradbury produced at the Crow Street Theatre, Dublin, the pantomime of 'Mother Goose.' Ellar was the Harlequin; Pantaloon, John Byrne; Clown, Bradbury; and Columbine, Miss Giroux. Strange at this period (1826), Miss Giroux—an aged and stout lady—in conjunction with her sister, presided over the Terpsichorean art in both Bath and Bristol.

In 1809, as a boy of fifteen, I was engaged in the pantomime of 'Mother Goose,' in Dublin, with Ellar; and delighted was he to meet so old an acquaintance as I, in order to talk over old times. Ellar told me that Bradbury picked him up in his native town of Manchester, poor and friendless; and, finding he had the necessary talent, he took him on speculation to the capital of Ireland. The manager, Frederick Jones, at first declined their services. The Cramptons, brothers—one Sir Philip, surgeon-general—the great friends of Jones, were the persons that got Bradbury and Ellar engaged.

These Cramptons were the beau-ideal of Irish gentlemen. They stood six feet one inch, and were built in proportion. Jones was not much less; and

another great companion, Captain O'Reilly, stood six feet two inches in height.

'Mother Goose' was brought out in great splendour. Tom Cooke arranged the music and overture. Never before or since has a pantomime been so remunerative. Bradbury gained as much attention in the streets, as he drove along in his tandem, as he did on the stage. He was called the Brummel of all the clowns. The receipts of his benefit were 560*l.*; Ellar's were 430*l.*

Bradbury commenced life in his native town, Manchester, as a carpenter, got engaged at the theatre as a scene-shifter with Riley, the author of 'The Itinerant.' A clown falling sick during the run of the pantomime brought the young carpenter forward, and Bradbury very soon appeared before a London audience at the Surrey, and became the great buffo after Grimaldi.

Bradbury is mentioned in 'The Life of Grimaldi.' It says: "He was engaged at the Wells to fill Joey's place in the pantomime during his absence in the country on a trial." In the interim Bradbury so gained on the good folks of Clerkenwell, that when the renowned Joey returned, the managers told him it would be a dangerous experiment to make any change, and thought it would be as well to let Bradbury finish the season.

"Then," exclaimed Grimaldi, "I'm ruined!"

Here is a proof that one clown was as good as another, when the great man said he was ruined. That such a calamity should not occur, the managers told Joey that they would get rid of Bradbury by giving a benefit. This salvo was sufficient, and Grimaldi appeared as Clown in the second act of the pantomime, while Bradbury was the primo buffo in the first act.

Grimaldi says that Bradbury got hooted from the stage for something gross which he had introduced. It must have been gross indeed to disgust at that period. Grimaldi himself was not particular to a shade. Besides, we must not place too much faith in respect to what one clown says of another in the same line.

In those fine old days of clowning, the pantomime did not rest on the transformation-scene, but on the wit, humour, and acting of the clown, irrespective of gorgeous scenery, gas, and glitter.

Bradbury, at one period of his life, went out of his senses, and, of all things, held forth as a preacher. His sermons must have been sorry discourses indeed; but when he recovered his reason he returned to his profession.

His latter days were not very brilliant, having, like Brummel, expended his fortune on tailors. Indeed, to so poor a position did this once dashing clown fall, that Ducrow buried him in 1834, in

London, and followed with his establishment to the grave the man that had often set the theatre in a roar.

In 1826 Liston paid a visit to Bristol, and made his appearance in the new comedy of 'Paul Pry.' This celebrated actor, when he entered the green-room of the Bristol Theatre, did not walk solemnly in, buried within himself; but entering with a cheerful smile, looked at the actors to see if there were any whom he had met with before; then on recognising an old acquaintance, he would grasp his hand most cordially, and express his pleasure in meeting with him. Indeed Liston resembled Napoleon in recollecting names. 'Tis said the emperor knew the name of every soldier in his army, and it was not a small one. But what I have stated of Liston I have experienced.

While attached to the Portsmouth and Southampton Theatres, I had personated the Steward in the farce of 'Fish out of Water;' and as the character was of vast importance to the great comedian, my attention in being perfect in the words enlisted his sympathy in my favour, and he requested of the manager at Bristol to set me down in the cast for the Steward. I have mentioned this circumstance, as it led to the *only* chance I ever had in my life of being placed on the list of performers at the Haymarket Theatre, in 1828.

Liston undertook to be my advocate with the London manager, and he kept his word, for he was a gentleman by birth and education. The offer which Morris made would have placed me among the underlings; and as I had endured one season at a London theatre, I was determined never to enter another, unless for a recognised line of characters. This I now admit was wrong. Entering a theatre like the Haymarket, under the auspices of the greatest comedian of the day, must have led to promotion. We see these impolitic acts of our early days when too late to remedy them.

In 1827 I was enrolled as a member of the Sunderland circuit, which had for its directress Mrs. Stephen Kemble; her nephew, John Bland, acting as stage-manager. This worthy man afterwards married the daughter of Mrs. Glover. Mrs. Kemble, now in the sear, was in her youthful days celebrated for her exquisite acting of Ophelia, and was the original Yarico at the Haymarket. Here I met with the original 'Wandering Minstrel,' Jem Baggs, Mitchell. The farce was first brought out under the management of the late stipendiary magistrate, Mr. A'Becket, at the Fitzroy Theatre, in 1833. Many may not understand where this theatre is or was located. It is near Tottenham Court Road, and has been variously designated as

the Tottenham Street, or West-London Theatre, the Queen's, and now lately has been named the Prince of Wales's Theatre.

I have seen many attempt Jem Baggs since, but never witnessed any one who could come up to Mitchell. He made some noise in the part, particularly with the clarionet.

Mitchell went to America, and opened a small theatre in New York, and died in the bosom of management.

Telbin, the scene-painter, began his career in the Sunderland Theatre as call-boy. His father acted as prompter, and for a man in that position, was pleasant. Prompters are not always so. Telbin the elder was an author, and wrote two dramas, 'The Siege of Scarboro' Castle,' and 'Jemmy Allen, the Northumberland Piper.'

This character, that really had a local habitation and a name, enlisted and deserted. In former years this was rather serious. The renowned piper was caught, and sentenced to be shot. The last scene represented all the preparations for carrying out the *dénouement* of Allen's career. Telbin represented the commander, and the part of an Irish serjeant, sustained by the writer of this, had to enter to the colonel respecting the last wish of the unfortunate piper. "Well, serjeant," says the colonel, "what does Allen desire?" The author's

words were, "to be allowed to play the 'Dead March' on the pipes to the place of execution;" instead of which I took an unwarrantable liberty with the author, who was face to face, and said: "He wishes to be allowed to dig his own grave." The author burst into a convulsive fit of laughter; the audience caught the mania, and the solemnity of the scene was perverted and destroyed.

During the period I remained in this circuit, the following stars visited us: Charles Kemble, brother-in-law to Mrs. S. Kemble, Miss Foote, Rayner, and the African Roscius. At that time he was known as Keene; now he is celebrated as Ira Aldridge, and may be called, not an African star, but the Great Bear, as he has wandered into Russia; a land but few ever think of visiting, particularly in the winter.

The African Roscius was noted for his performance of Mungo, in Dibdin's operatic farce of the 'Padlock;' and as he was desirous to bring it forward in Sunderland, he found an obstacle, as the first singer Bywater had just died, and there was no Leander. In this dilemma, I was requested by the sable Roscius to personate the youthful lover. This was declined, as Mungo was my character, according to terms of engagement. However, in the end I yielded, as I never stood in the way of

business, but indeed made it my study to assist a brother performer.

Rayner was Emery's successor at Covent Garden, but no more to be compared to the inimitable John Emery than I to Hercules. Yet Rayner was a favourite, and realised a deal of money in the North; but keeping company with jockey lords, he was cleared out of all his hard-earned cash, and reduced to nothing.

Stephen Kemble, who died in Durham, conducted the Sunderland circuit for years, and was also manager of the Glasgow Theatre. His Falstaff was an attraction; for this gross character he could act without stuffing. There were others too he appeared in, such as Othello and Hamlet. An engraving is still in existence of Stephen Kemble in the Prince of Denmark, in an old-fashioned black coat, breeches, vest, shoes, buckles, and a large flowing auburn wig. I am not in possession of his costume for Othello, but should imagine from this, that he dressed the noble Moor much as Garrick was in the habit of doing; coat, breeches, and a white judge's wig. He selected white, as it matched his complexion. What ideas they had of costume in those days! In 1815, in Scotland, I have seen Macbeth dressed in a red officer's coat, sash, blue pants, Hessian boots, and *a cocked-hat!*

Stephen Kemble personated Othello one night in the Glasgow Theatre, and a circumstance occurred in the last scene which turned the tragedy into a comedy. When the bed of Desdemona was arranged, the property-man, or person who provides all utensils for breakfasts, dinners, &c., being a new hand, and in eager anxiety to have every thing right and proper, fit for a *chambre accouché*, placed something under the bed which is always dispensed with. The curtain drew up, and Kemble entered, speaking the soliloquy, "My soul, it is the cause, it is the cause!" A tittering took place, and then a laugh. Stephen Kemble stopped, looked round, and perceived the cause of all the hilarity, then rushed off the stage, seized the unlucky property man by the neck as he would Iago, and roared out, "Villain! villain!" The terrified wretch cried, "Oh, sir, pardon me. I assure you I couldn't get the loan of a white one anywhere."

In 1827, the Newcastle Theatre was under the management of Nicholson. The leading performers were Samuel and George Butler, Gill, and Miss Cleaver. Samuel Butler I had known in the Nottingham Theatre as an actor, and in Northallerton and Ripon as a manager, and in both capacities he gained the esteem of all who were acquainted with him. He has been long since gathered unto his

fathers, and the stage has lost a sterling tragedian. While Charles Kemble was manager of Covent Garden Theatre, Butler made his *début* in Hamlet, and the whole of the press declared it a complete success. He repeated the character; but his third appearance was not so fortunate, when he attempted a part entirely out of his style, Mark Antony. This character had been always filled by Charles Kemble when a performer, but now being manager he assumed the lead, and placed his own name in the bills for Brutus, the very character, according to the impression made in Hamlet, which ought to have been allotted to Butler; consequently this splendid actor sank, and was compelled to degrade his histrionic powers in a melodrama called 'The Black Diamond.'

Butler sprang from a theatrical family: his father, mother, sister, brother, and grandfather, were all performers. Jefferson, the grandfather by the mother's side, was a tragedian at Drury Lane with Garrick. Samuel Butler's father conducted the Northallerton, Ripon, Harrogate, and Richmond circuit for many years, with such success that he was always ready on the Saturday to meet his performers with their salaries, which were not very heavy—15*s.* a-week being the average; it was in fact a standing rule never *to exceed that sum*. No matter what talent an

actor possessed, he must fall into the ranks like a common soldier, and be content with the common lot.

Edmund Kean in 1805, at the age of seventeen, was a member of this company, and did the walking gentlemen, harlequin, and comic singing for 15*s.* a-week. This was after his engagement at Dumfries with Moss.

In 1821 Kean paid a starring visit to North-allerton for a few nights. Being a small theatre, the prices were doubled. The day after the first performance Sam Butler waited on Kean with 40*l.*—half of the receipts. When the manager was shown into the star's room at the hotel, he placed on the table the money, and handed Kean the paper with an account of cash taken at the door. Kean looked at it, and said, pointing to the money:

“Put that in your pocket.”

Butler stared. Kean continued:

“In this very town, when as a stripling your father assisted me in accomplishing a journey to London, on parting I told him if ever Fortune should smile on me, that I would not forget him. Fortune *has* smiled on me, and I am proud of paying to the son the debt so many years due to the father. Put up the money, and now we shall *proceed according to the terms of engagement.*”

This circumstance is an absolute fact, for I performed at Northallerton at the time.

When the pantomime of 'Mother Goose' was first performed here, Kean was the Harlequin, and Samuel Butler represented the Goose, and for many years was called by the boys in the street, "Goose—goose!" However, when he grew up to manhood it would have been a dangerous epithet to apply to him; for he stood six feet in his stocking-feet, and possessed manly courage to resent any insult.

In this charming money-getting circuit the Tayleurs and Meadowses were reared. The elder Meadows declared:—"After being attached to Theatres Royal in his time, he never knew what *real* happiness was till he came to this circuit."

After the death of the elder Butler, the circuit became disjointed and the company disorganised; but fortunately a lady of rank at Ripon—Miss Lawrence, one of the De Grey family—took what remained of the establishment under her protection, and settled on each performer twenty-five guineas a-year. Such liberality to actors is without parallel. Those persons were, Mrs. Butler and her daughter Mrs. Percy, Martin (prompter) and wife, Jefferson (Butler's uncle), and old George. This latter member of the company had *been in it fifty years*, and lodged with Kean in his

juvenile days of adversity. Edmund did not forget his old companion in his last visit.

After Sam Butler left Covent Garden he became a great favourite at the Surrey, particularly in *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, and *Coriolanus*.

The comedy of 'The School of Reform,' written by *the* Morton, was produced, in which Butler performed Robert Tyke. His delineation of this most difficult character was hailed with acclamations, and acknowledged to stand second only to Emery's powerful portraiture. Butler, like the great original, was both bold and comic: hence the difficulty of procuring a comedian that possesses both qualities. Now Rayner's Tyke was all force, without that ease and softness which Emery threw into it.

Butler produced a powerful sensation in Manchester, and after his engagement at the theatre was induced to give Shakespearian readings. On his way to the rooms he dropped down in the streets, and was carried home a stiffened corpse. The whole town paid every mark of respect to his widow, and made her a benefit which has never been exceeded even in that mart of commerce.

In the summer of 1827 I made my *début* at the Theatre Royal, Windsor, in Gaspar, in 'The Foundling of the Forest,' and Polyglot, in 'The *Scape-Goat*.' Samuel Penley, of Drury

Lane, and author of the farce of 'The Sleeping Draught,' was the manager; leading actor, R. Younge, of Drury Lane; light comedian, S. Penley; second ditto, M. Penley; walking gentleman, Booth—not Junius Brutus; low comedian, Benjamin Webster; prompter, Turnour; vocalist, Horncastle; juvenile, John Webster; comic old man, Donaldson; property man and clown, Hogg—not the Ettrick; eccentric low comedian, Burton. This actor afterwards sailed to America, and some time ago died in New York worth 100,000 dollars. This money was not realised by acting: but obtained by management. As an actor he might have remained all his days in England, and stolen at last poor and obscurely to his grave.

In former years America presented to the discarded actor a rich and fertile field, for there the taste for the legitimate drama was in the ascendant; but now the taste has degenerated, if we may judge of the following article, copied from a New York paper ('The World'):

"The drinking saloons exhibit gross and vulgar performances on their stages from night to midnight; and the visitor may get comfortably drunk in his seat, if he desires. There are attendant Hebes too, in the shape of pretty waiters; girls who will bring him chalices of any variety of drink. *Thus he may booze in peace, have his intellect*

improved, his taste chastened, and his *spiritual* faculties exalted by Ethiopic colloquy, noisy vocal and instrumental strains, pantomimic mummary, mysterious disappearances, sudden tricks, rope-swinging, miserable dancing and more miserable singing, hash-trash, and every sort of buffoonery, in order to attract the silly and weak-minded.

“We think that the interests of the community demand of the legislature the immediate extinction of all such places of resort. They disgrace the city, as they disgrace our civilisation; they are contaminating our youth, accelerating the depravity of those not altogether depraved, and sowing broadcast the seeds of social degeneracy and decadence.

“Such shameless appeals as they daily make through the columns of ‘The Herald’—the only sheet vile enough to lend itself to such uses—would not be tolerated for a day in the most dissolute city in Europe.

“The absorption of the public mind in the civil war has allowed these evils to flourish for a season; but the time will come to *demand* their removal, under the penalty of such punishment as shall deter a repetition of such degrading exhibitions.”

So much for New York and the state of her

amusements. It is to be hoped a reform will soon take place, and a just sense of propriety and decency supersede the evils complained of.

M. Laurent, director of the Italian Opera in Paris this summer (1827), conceived the idea of blending English theatricals with Italian, and alternately introducing Shakespeare and Rossini at the Favart Theatre. Laurent's long intercourse with the Messrs. Galignani gave him some knowledge of the English and their language; and having at his disposal an elegant theatre, with its staff of servants, the enterprise presented every prospect of success. Abbott, of Covent Garden, and Broad, were engaged as stage-manager and prompter; in fact, Broad was treasurer, stage-director, and every thing where real judgment was necessary. This talented man was the architect who built the St. James's Theatre and other structures, and in the end got into the trammels of the law; and although he had right on his side he was necessitated to seek an asylum across the Atlantic, where he succumbed to the pangs of disappointment.

M. Laurent, although a Frenchman, spoke English fluently with a trifling accent. For years he had been connected with the Messrs. Galignani, and consequently had daily intercourse with the English. Laurent, being perfectly aware of the

ause why English theatricals never succeeded on the Continent, determined to act diametrically opposite to the dishonourable adventurers who had rushed over with the exodus in 1815, and rushed back again, leaving their dupes in a fix how they might tread the shores of Albion once more.

Laurent promised salaries from twenty-four napoleons a-week down to three; and not only such liberal terms did he offer, but he engaged to pay eighty francs to each performer for travelling expenses to and fro. The journey from London to Paris occupied four or five days, at that time, at a cost of 4*l.*; now it is accomplished in eleven hours, at the charge of 1*l.* 1*s.* Miss Smithson, from Drury Lane, had twenty-four napoleons per week; Abbott twenty; eight, six, four, and three were the salaries of the rest of the company.

Sheridan's splendid comedy of 'The Rivals' was fixed on for the opening of the campaign; and in order that a good impression should be made, the first of English comedians—Liston—was engaged for Acres. If Liston had been studying to select a part to insure a failure, perhaps he could not have chosen one more likely to bring about such a result. Acres required an actor such as Jack Bannister, sprightly and dashing. Now Liston's style was the contrary, and the dashing Bob Acres was a disappointment. The audience

never laughed ; indeed how could they ? for there was nothing to laugh at. The manager proposed another trial : but Liston was indignant ; he felt the slight, and considered it *national*, and meant to have it brought before the house—not the parliament— but the play-house — and denounced in Drury Lane green-room the French as “ a set of jackasses.”

It was first intended to engage Dowton and Liston together, and bring out ‘The Hypocrite.’ Had this been wisely done—had Dowton appeared as Dr. Cantwell and Liston as Mawworm—the French would have witnessed two of the greatest pieces of acting in comedy ever attempted on the stage. But this wise determination was abandoned, and the fate of the English drama hung now on an actress that for six years at Drury Lane was kept entirely in the back-ground ; and this was Miss Smithson, who was brought from Ireland with the hope that she would prove a second Miss O’Neill. Alas ! they might as well have hoped for a second Kean. Yet Miss Smithson was superior to the position in which she was placed at Old Drury. She was neither more nor less than the “ walking lady.” But when she appeared in Paris she was found to possess qualities that are seldom visible in the walking lady : she had fire, a splendid voice, a tall and noble person ; and after

Liston's failure Miss Smithson's Jane Shore was a success and ran twenty-five nights, putting more money into the manager's pocket than Kean, Macready, Miss Foote, or Charles Kemble. 'Jane Shore' was followed by 'Romeo and Juliet.' Miss Smithson's Juliet was equally as attractive, for she became quite the rage with the Parisians.

Charles the Tenth or Charles Dix then reigned, and although he never visited a theatre, still the Duchess of Berri and the rest of the royal family frequently attended the Favart Theatre to witness the English performances. These distinguished personages used often to jostle against the actors behind the scenes on their way to the royal box.

Theatrical wandering stars were not so numerous as in the present day. The absolute London stamp was necessary to enable the star to pass current, and this must be affixed at either Covent Garden or Drury Lane.

Of course such a system as starring is not the mode in Paris. It is true the French had heard of such names as Kemble, Siddons, Jordan, O'Neill, and Kean. All others, however, were unknown to French fame.

Daniel Terry, who before the days of William Farren was the Sir Peter Teazle at Covent Garden, paid a visit to Paris *pour plaisir*.

Being an old associate of the stage-manager's

(Abbott), it was arranged over their wine that the 'Merchant of Venice' should be brought forward; and in Shylock Terry determined to try his powers before a Parisian audience.

The announcement of this play of the immortal Bard's brought a good house, and Terry's reception was truly flattering; but his conception of the Jew was quite the opposite of Edmund Kean's. It was a growling, grinning, snarling old man, who excited tittering from the beginning to the end of the play.

A similar exhibition took place at Drury Lane—Kean's first season in London—when Dowton on his benefit-night attempted Shylock. It is generally admitted that Shylock is the most difficult part in the drama, and to find a finished portraiture of this character is a treat only once in a century to be expected.

Had Terry made his first appearance in Sir Peter Teazle, he would have done very well, and met with general approbation. Yet the 'School for Scandal' was performed only one night in Paris, and went off coldly. The brilliant writing and sparkling wit of this the best of all modern comedies was not understood by the French. The language of Sheridan requires an intelligent audience of English spectators, perfectly alive to the text, before they can relish those profound flashes of wit

CAST OF THE 'SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL.' 179

the wonder of his age. The characters in Paris were filled by the following actors :

<i>Sir Peter Teazle</i>	.	.	Chippendale, sen.
<i>Sir Oliver Surface</i>	.	.	Younger.
<i>Sir Benjamin Backbite</i>	.	.	Charles Hill.
<i>Crabtree</i>	.	.	Stephen Bennett.
<i>Charles Surface</i>	.	.	Abbott.
<i>Joseph Surface</i>	.	.	Charles Kemble Mason.
<i>Careless</i>	.	.	Hemming.
<i>Rowley</i>	.	.	Burke.
<i>Moses</i>	.	.	Donaldson.
<i>Sir Toby Bumper</i>	.	.	Dale.
<i>Trip</i>	.	.	John Lee.
<i>Lady Teazle</i>	.	.	Miss Smithson.
<i>Mrs. Candour</i>	.	.	Miss Pelham.*
<i>Lady Sneerwell</i>	.	.	Mrs. Broad.
<i>Maria</i>	.	.	Miss Macallen.

Even with such a cast as the above, the 'School for Scandal' was not attractive. The management were advised to stick to tragedy ; and on this hint they acted and brought out 'Hamlet' for the purpose of introducing Charles Kemble in the Prince of Denmark. An elegant and fashionable audience assembled, and Kemble's delineation of this the most sublime of Shakespeare's works elicited the warmest applause.

* This young lady had talent, and it was rumoured was one of the Newcastle family. She assumed the name certainly, but this is common even in the present day ; we have a Miss Palmerston and Miss Disraeli.

In Hamlet he could not soar to such flights of genius as Charles Young; yet, in the quiet portions of the character, he maintained the polished dignity of the prince and scholar, and never lost sight of either throughout the acting of the tragedy.

Miss Foote* succeeded Kemble, and made her appearance in Lady Teazle, and Variella in the farce of the 'Weathercock.' In this latter piece Miss Foote sung 'Buy a broom,' dressed in character, and met with an *encore*. But the great sensational character in this well-written farce, was Stephen Bennett's Briefwit, a lawyer who only troubles his client with the monosyllable "good." This word the French perfectly understood, and it became a byeword in Paris. Bennett played the part well. This actor was the smallest comedian on the stage, and possessed originality and judgment. He made his *début* at the Haymarket, in Peter Simpson, in Poole's *petite* comedy of 'Simpson and Co.', and was declared quite equal to the original, Terry. He was not so fortunate in his second character, Dr. Pangloss, in Coleman's comedy of the 'Heir at Law.' This was one of Fawcett's great efforts, and as Bennett's powers were absolutely trifling to the herculean comedian,

* This celebrated actress is in no way related to any of the Footes on the stage at the present day.

of course his attempt could not bear comparison, and he failed.

As long as our legitimate comedies and farces were the rage, great must have been the powers of the comedian who entered the field against Liston, Mathews, Fawcett, Bannister, Munden, Dowton, Emery, Jack Johnstone, William Blanchard, William Farren, Elliston, and Richard Jones; artists all original and all unapproachable.

Yet I have known actors, scarcely up to mediocrity, labour under the delusion that they were the equal of some of the inimitable characters named; but when an attempt in the metropolis was made, they were restored to a dim consciousness of the true standard of their ability, and fell to soar no more.

When Dowton left Drury Lane, in 1818, two comedians were tried to fill his place, and both egregiously failed; and at Covent Garden, the cold reception of a provincial actor in Sir Antony Absolute produced in the aspirant madness.

I am enabled to give something of the *inner life* of the Italian opera in Paris, as the English theatricals were under the same management, and exhibited in the same theatre, the Favart, now the Opéra Comique. This season (1828) was big with interest, for M. Laurent could boast of three most extraordinary characters in his establishment.

The first was the greatest composer of the age, Rosini; the second, Madame Malibran, the greatest vocalist and actress of any age; and the third, the composer of the 'Bohemian Girl,' Balfe, an opera that has not only gained immortal renown in England, but in continental capitals, has met with the universal approbation of the judicious.

Balfe, in 1828, was a baritone, and made his *debut* in Figaro. Bardogni, the instructor of Adelaide Kemble, was the Almaviva, and Malibran the Rosina.

Malibran at this time was scarcely twenty-one, in the bloom of womanhood, and her *debut* eclipsed all the vocalists who had preceded her for years. Her Desdemona, Romeo, and brilliant portraiture of Julietta, electrified her audiences and nightly crammed the Opera-house to repletion. We have had the Catalinis and the Pastas, renowned for the majestic walks of the Italian school, but I believe Malibran was the only one whose person and powers were adapted either for the sublimity of opera, or for those gay and buoyant parts, such as Juliet and Rosina.

Sixteen years after this I stood over her grave in Lacken Cemetery, Brussels, where her remains repose under a magnificent mausoleum; and as she was borne to her last resting-place, she was followed by thousands who mourned the departure

of the fair *cantatrice* from a city that appreciated such extraordinary gifts.

The Italian Opera in Paris had another prima donna besides Malibran. This was Signora Pissironi, supposed to be the most scientific singer in Europe; but unfortunately she was elderly and rather ugly, two unpardonable faults in a woman.

Signor Zuchelli, the rich and powerful bari-tone of the Italian Theatre, was universally admired in Paris, and having received a tempting offer from London, he crossed the Channel and made his *début* at Her Majesty's.

Michael Kelly was stage-manager at this time, and on the Signor's introduction behind the scenes to the facetious Michael for the first time, the stage-manager stared at the Italian vocalist and exclaimed, "I think we have met before; pray, were you ever in Wine Tavern Street, Dublin?" "Rather," cried the Signor. "And I think," continued Kelly, "we are schoolfellows and namesakes; and instead of Signor Zuchelli, you are my old friend Teddy Kelly, of the Cross Poddle."

The Signor acknowledged the soft impeachment, and cordially embraced his warm-hearted countryman.

Sheridan Knowles's play of 'William Tell' was produced with considerable effect in Paris. William Tell, Macready; Michael, Abbott; Milthal,

Chapman; Albert, Master John Webster; Gesler and Seneschal, Messrs. Dale and Chippendale; Emma, Miss Smithson.

The historian who visits Paris and wanders from the gardens of the Tuileries to the Place Louis XV. cannot avoid reflecting on the scenes which have occurred on this spot. Cold and callous must that heart be that ponders on the fate of the most lovely of women, Marie Antoinette, and does not denounce her murderers as "fiends in human shape." Edmund Burke imagined "thousands of swords would have leaped from their scabbards in her defence." No sex, no age or condition were respected by those monsters. The sacred temples of religion were transformed to other rites, and even the Calendar (1792) was altered to please the sanguinary despots. Those who peruse the history of the Revolution, may be gratified with the names which the months received at that period:

AUTUMNAL MONTHS.

<i>Vendémiaire</i>	.	.	.	September.
<i>Brumaire</i>	.	.	.	October.
<i>Frimaire</i>	.	.	.	November.

WINTER MONTHS.

<i>Nivôse</i>	.	.	.	December.
<i>Pluviose</i>	.	.	.	January.
<i>Ventôse</i>	.	.	.	February.

NAPOLEON THE EMBODIMENT OF ORDER. 185

SPRING MONTHS.

<i>Germinal</i>	.	.	.	.	March.
<i>Floréal</i>	.	.	.	.	April.
<i>Prairial</i>	.	.	.	.	May.

SUMMER MONTHS.

<i>Messidor</i>	.	.	.	.	June.
<i>Thermidor</i>	.	.	.	.	July.
<i>Fructidor</i>	.	.	.	.	August.

At the restoration of order by Napoleon the old names of the months came into use again, and the sacred temples were opened for the purposes of religion. But the great and most durable benefit which Napoleon conferred on the people, was his "Code of just laws."

This sub-lieutenant, who made emperors fly before him, reigned at one period over ninety-eight millions of souls, and in his progresses, "Vive l'Empereur!" was shouted in eight languages—French, Italian, Swiss, German, Spanish, Portuguese, Belgian, and Dutch.

Napoleon has been condemned for introducing a military system in his dominions; yet the system works well in many instances, particularly in the Frères or National Schools. As the sentinel must mount guard, no matter what domestic affliction he may suffer, so must the schoolmaster be at his post at nine in the morning, should his home be a scene of mourning.

The *claqueurs*, or applauders, in theatres are

arranged on military principles, and are drilled and organised by their commander or captain. Even the great Talma and Mademoiselle Mars were obliged to have their hired band of applauders.

Sometime ago a person was summoned in Paris to attend a trial. An excuse was made, that being the captain of the *claqueurs* at such a theatre, his duties prevented him from attending.

The state in Paris at this time (1828) appeared to be out of tune for such pieces as 'Virginius;' 'William Tell' and 'Massaniello' were all the rage. At the Grand Opera, the Académie Royal, 'Massaniello' just burst on the public, and was hailed with enthusiasm; thus indicating that a storm was brewing in the political horizon, which burst in two years afterwards.

Edmund Kean was engaged in Paris for six weeks, and made his first appearance in 'Richard the Third.' So full was the house on this occasion, that *one hundred and fifty napoleons* were taken for *admission to the orchestra*. Musicians were dispensed with during the English drama in Paris; the only instrumental accompaniment which took place during the season was that of a harp, for a new composition by Balfe, the Savoyard's glee in 'William Tell;' and this was the first attempt of this celebrated man. Kean performed in Paris eighteen nights at fifty pounds a-night; his

characters were Richard, Othello, Shylock, Lear, Brutus, in the 'Fall of Tarquin,' and Sir Giles Overreach. To judge from the many stories current of Edmund Kean, one might be led to imagine that he was the most reckless and careless actor that ever trod the boards of a London theatre.

Having come in collision with him sixteen years out of the nineteen he reigned in the Metropolis as the *leading* tragedian of Great Britain, I am consequently capable of giving some idea of his mode of conduct during that period.

From the days of David Garrick, Kean was the *only* actor that never allowed a London manager to place his name in the bills for a *secondary* character. Even Garrick himself, when an engaged performer, had to personate inferior parts.

When Lewis brought out his play of the 'Castle Spectre,' in the original cast John Kemble's name may be found for the walking gentleman, Earl Percy; and in the 'Merchant of Venice,' Antonio was personated by that classic actor to George Cooke's Shylock.

Cooke himself, although the great star of his age, did the heavies in the comedies of 'John Bull' and 'The School of Reform' — the sermonising Peregrine and prosing Lord Avondale.

On the revival of 'King Lear' at Covent Garden in 1820, Macready was the Edmund to Booth's

Lear, and the Pizarro to Young's Rolla; and both these tragedians, Young and Macready, at Drury Lane, acted Iago to Edmund Kean's Othello.

Yes, I have had plenty of opportunities to perceive that Kean was most tenacious of the exalted position he had achieved, and was determined never to give a rival a chance to push him from it. Not that any of them gave the slightest alarm to the little man; well knowing his tremendous and overpowering genius, he could send them into the shade at any time. This was evident at Drury Lane in 1822, when Charles Young was pitted against him in Othello.

The language of the greatest critic of his age, Hazlitt, may give some idea of Kean's superiority in Richard and Shylock:

"It is impossible to form a higher conception of Richard the Third than that given by Kean; never was character represented with greater distinctness and precision, and perfectly articulated in every part. If Kean did not succeed in concentrating all the lines of the character, he gave a vigour and relief to the part which we have never seen surpassed. He was more refined than Cooke; bolder and more original than Kemble. The scene with Lady Ann was an admirable specimen of smooth and smiling duplicity. Wily adulation was firmly marked by his eye, and he ap-

peared like the first tempter in the garden. Kean's attitude in leaning against the pillar was one of the most graceful and striking positions ever witnessed. It would have served a Titian, Raphael, or Salvator Rosa as a model. The transitions from the fiercest passion to the most familiar tone was a quality which Kean possessed over every other actor that ever appeared. Many attempted this style, and all have most egregiously failed."

It was in Shylock that Kean first tried his powers at Drury Lane.

The public—particularly that *very* small portion that *really* know good acting—went to Drury Lane with the idea of seeing Shylock represented in the usual style—bent with age, ugly, dirty, with mental deformity, grinning deadly malice, sullen, morose, gloomy, inflexible, brooding over one idea, that of his hatred; and fixed to one unalterable purpose, that of his revenge.

But Kean took the town by surprise. No *paragraphs* from the provinces heralded his coming; no *puffing*; no friends. His look, his manner, his walk, the brilliancy of his searching eye, his expressive face, his pathos—all combined to rivet the attention of his audience; and such was his masterly skill in the scene with Tubal, that all judges pronounced him the *first* actor of the age.

There is no proof that Shylock is very old and infirm.

The *theatre* is not the best place to study Shakespeare in. It is too often filled with traditional common-place conceptions of character, handed down from one actor to another, and from the simple sire to his *more* simple son.

If a man of genius, such as Edmund Kean, appears once in fifty years to clear away the rubbish, in order to render the histrionic art more fruitful and wholesome, some of the *would-be* critics start up and cry, "This is a novel style, unlike Kemble. It is a bad school, and will not do. It may be like nature—it may be according to Shakespeare; but it is not according to *our* ideas. We are advanced, and that which satisfied our fathers will not satisfy us." "*Admirable* critics!"

What testimony can be stronger than that of the renowned critic that understood Shakespeare and the dramatic art in so preëminent a degree!

Kean, in his youthful wanderings, was awake while others were dozing, and made himself *au fait* in every thing necessary for his profession; and he stored that extraordinary head with knowledge. The cast taken at Richmond after death will give a good idea of the man. As a swordsman he stood quite alone. He was a musician, dancer, pantomimist, and a dramatic scholar; in fact, he was

every thing that constituted a powerful and finished actor; and as a proof of genius, he was no copyist, but perfectly original.

While I was attached to a small *troupe* of comedians in Hoddesdon, Hertfordshire, in 1817, Miss Sams, at the library in that town, told me she well recollected Edmund Kean, at the age of sixteen, acting in the town-hall with Humphrey's company; and many a time she obliged him with the loan of a Greek lexicon. At this period Kean left the stage, and was engaged in the Hoddesdon Seminary as an assistant. Kean has been called thoughtless; but who can question his foresight and want of knowledge of the future, when he placed his son in a college where he was likely to come in contact with the first in the land—with the Newcastles, Carlises, Rutlands, Eglintons, Cravens, Sandwiches, Exmouths, Manners, Bruces, Lindsays, Cowpers, Selkirks, Chesterfields, Scotts, McDonalds, Gladstones, Doyles, Walpoles, and Burgoynes?

The following remarks on Edmund Kean, I think, are not unworthy of a place near those of Hazlitt's, and may tend to strengthen those of the great critic.

"The late Edmund Kean, if as was asserted at the time, his acting differed from that of all his predecessors, so may it assuredly be said that none of

his successors in the remotest degree resembled him. Now and then his son Charles, in some isolated look, or tone, or gesture, recalls for a moment his gifted father to remembrance; but the illusion is but transient. Of Edmund Kean, in his entirety, it may truly be affirmed that 'none but himself could be his parallel.'

"He was alone, equally alone, in force, energy, power, originality, and conception. Every impersonation was instinct with truth, and bore evidence of the highest genius.

"What was, perhaps, his most remarkable distinctiveness was his perfect transfusion, as it were, of himself into and lifelike embodiment of the character he represented. For the time being, he was wholly and absolutely the person he enacted.

"It was this complete identification of his own nature with, and his absorption into himself, of the woes and wrongs, the feelings and actions, of the part he was playing, which was the secret of the rivetted attention and quite unparalleled sway he exercised over the emotions, hearts, and sympathies of his audience.*

* Kean's great faculty of making each character distinct, gave him a superiority over all the tragedians of his day. They were alike in every character; but Kean's Shylock, Richard, Othello, Brutus, Reuben Glenroy, and Sir Edward Mortimer—all were different.

"In Othello, for instance, among many of his most marvellous distinctions—where each throb of passion, each pang of torture, was indicated with unerring and surpassing fidelity and minuteness—you had the same tears, compassionateness, and pity; the same intense and burning indignation for what you witnessed; and your susceptibilities as strangely and vividly responded to the appeal made to them—as if, instead of simulated suffering, you were spectators of and participators in some sorrowful tragedy in domestic life. His height and figure were not unfavourable in the assumption, perhaps, of stateliness. Yet I never can admit that there were not passages in his acting of native and superlative dignity. His rebuke to Cassio, in 'Othello,' was preëminently so; he crossed the stage with calm majestic tread to where the culprit stood convicted, and, in a voice of stern inexorable authority, which had an awful grandeur in it, said:

'Cassio, I love thee;
But never more be officer of mine.'

No one surely who ever heard him say those words could accuse him of want of dignity.

"His pauses were long, and perhaps too frequent. One of his peculiarities was that, however instinctively and familiarly acquainted with his acting

you were, you never could tell beforehand how he would treat and interpret any new part.

“In most actors there is a conventional style—such a general and sustained *mannerism*—that, when announced for any novel character, you can form a pretty shrewd and accurate idea of how it will be rendered by them. This was never the case with Kean.

“In conception he was so perfectly and apparently impulsive, that every fresh embodiment exhibited some startling unconceived surprise, never realised before. He might literally be said to

‘Paint the lily and gild refined gold.’

“The most devoted Shakespearian, who had pored and pondered over the words of his idol for years, might receive the impress of a new light thrown on their meaning by Kean’s reading of the parts assigned to him.

“The oft-repeated quotation, ‘One touch of nature makes the whole world akin,’ might not inappropriately be applied to his acting. The startling originality, the intense energy, the subtle power, the novel conceptions, were adjuncts and accessories undoubtedly to the colossal fame which, as an actor, he enjoyed. But the great secret of his success was that he was simply, wholly, truthfully, and really natural.

"He exhibited humanity as it is, in all its aspects, varieties, and conflicts of passion. Hence his supreme ascendancy over the feelings of his audience—the hearts of thousands beating as one man beneath his faithful and marvellous portraiture of emotions, affections, and infirmities of a nature common to all."

Gerald Griffin, poet, novelist, and dramatist, and author of 'The Collegians, or Colleen Bawn,' speaks of Edmund Kean in the following language: "What would I give to see Edmund Kean act Hardress Cregan—just to witness him at the party before his arrest, where he is endeavouring to do the polite to the ladies, while the horrid warning voice of guilt is in his ear. The very movements of Kean's countenance in such a scene as that would make one's flesh creep. Every motion and attitude of his—his ghastly efforts at complaisance, and his subdued sense of impending ruin—would be all-sufficient to keep an audience in a thrill of horror, and, without a word spoken, would indicate the whole agony of his mind."

A Sketch of Kean's Family.—Kean's grandfather, George Savill Carey, was a native of Ireland, and wrote several poems, and the 'Matchless Maid of Morpeth.' He was the son of Harry Carey, author of the words of 'God save the

Queen,' and the popular English ballad of 'Sally in our alley,' rendered so famous by Incledon.

George Kean's grandfather was an actor, lecturer, and a mimic; and his daughter—the mother of Edmund—had produced some poetical works, and the writer of this work once acted in a company where she sustained a prominent line of characters.

As Kean's grandfather was a mimic, Edmund was not devoid of this quality himself. I have seen him give imitations of John Kemble, Incledon, Braham, and Joey Munden; and the best judges pronounced them of the very first order.

Edmund Kean was always a welcome star at Portsmouth, in the days when the theatre in the High Street could return a receipt of 120*l*.

In 1824, on his benefit, he was favoured with a densely-filled house, intermingled with the *élite* of both services. On this occasion Kean acted Sir Giles Overreach, in Massenger's play of 'A New Way to pay Old Debts,' and Sylvester Dag-gerwood, or the Mad Actor. In the latter character he gave imitations of John Kemble, Braham, Incledon, Joey Munden, and himself.

His imitation of Incledon, in the pathetic ballad of 'My trim-built wherry,' absolutely startled the audience—he sang it in such a sweet and delicious style; and although he acted the most vigorous part in the play, Sir Giles, yet in the

farce he was fresh, buoyant, gay, and truly comic. He danced, sang, fenced, and was as playful as a kitten.

It is no wonder that Edmund Kean should be versatile. Look at the Irish stock he sprang from—poets, mimics, actors; and, to crown all, his father was a *lawyer*.

Johnson had doubts respecting Garrick's really believing himself the character he was representing.

There can be no doubt in this particular with Edmund Kean; for, as John Kemble acknowledged, "he was most dreadfully in earnest."

If the dead have any consciousness of the living, how must the spirit of Edmund Kean exult at the ovation paid to his son at the St. James's Hall in 1859, when nine hundred guests sat down to a sumptuous banquet, given on his retirement from the management of the Princess's Theatre! Her most gracious Majesty commanded that the band of the Guards should attend; while the Principal of Eton College, as a further mark of esteem, contributed the choir, and Montem Smith to preside on the occasion. A nobleman acted as chairman, the late Duke of Newcastle, the loss of whose worth and talent will not only be felt in the state, but throughout the various grades of society, where his Grace's services and kindness of heart were solicited and required.

The following is the speech that his Grace delivered, with that clearness and ease which always marked the oratorical powers of the gifted Colonial Minister.

His Grace, after alluding to Charles Kean and Eton College, said:

“For though we always had many names distinguished amongst us—generals, statesmen, philosophers, poets, and others—it is only now that we have a son of Eton who has brought fresh lustre to the school to which we belonged, and to whom we are therefore anxious to prove our admiration. It would occupy you too long were I to attempt to give any thing like a biography of our guest; but I may be permitted to mention in this assembly, initiated by *Etonians*, that it is thirty-five years ago since he and I, and many more at this table, were associated together in that school.

“That as a scholar he was distinguished, you may judge from what you have seen of his after life; and that as a boy he was popular, I may appeal to the friends I see assembled round me this night.

“In six years after he left Eton he performed on the boards of Covent Garden Theatre for the last time with his distinguished father, who died shortly afterwards; and performed also with another, Miss Ellen Tree, who has been the parti-

cipator of all his labours and all his cares, and now is, happily, the participator in the honours which are showered upon him.

"In the days of ancient Greece, the theatre and the drama were the most effective instruments in forming the character of that remarkable people; and even at this moment it is an undoubted index to the *social* status of a people.

"I have referred to ancient Greece, in which the actor was deemed worthy of the *highest* honours in the state.

"It is strange, in this land of literature and art, while poets, sculptors, and painters receive some portion of approbation,—it is strange that that branch of art, the most difficult to arrive at excellence in, should be cast in the shade and treated with obloquy, or, at any rate, with indifference.*

"Honour then to the man who has raised the stage from what it was when he entered upon it to what it is now.

"He is a great historical painter. I see some distinguished professors of the art of painting in this room, and I ask whether they do not look upon Mr. Charles Kean as a rival in the art. Happily for *them*, *their* productions descend fresh

* It is strange, indeed, why such men as Kemble, Kean, C. Young, Macready, and Vandenhoff should pass through life without the honour of knighthood attached to their names.

from their easel to posterity; but unhappily for *him*, *his* perish the same evening, and *leave nothing* but their fame behind.*

“And therefore I will only say, that I now ask you to drink to the health of one whose public virtues and whose private character have raised up around him a wide circle of admiring friends; to one whose zeal for his profession, amounting almost to enthusiasm, has led him to prove that the theatre may be made, not a mere vehicle for *frivolous* amusement, or what is worse, dissipation; but that it may be erected into a gigantic instrument of education for the instruction of the young, and edification as well as amusement of those of maturer age.”

Here publicly, one of the first nobles of the land, and a Privy Councillor too, declares “the dramatic art—the most difficult to attain—is treated with neglect and obloquy.” So would the law and the medical art, if they were left to chance, without legislation or protection.

What we want for the dramatic art is some criterion to know who is a comedian and who is not. Certainly, editors ought to know this. A

* Dr. Syntax speaks on this point:

“But when the actor sinks to rest,
And the turf lies upon his breast,
A poor traditionary fame
Is all that's left to grace his name.”

man who can only sing a comic song, cannot come under the term of *comedian*. No performer can assume such a title, except one that had been accustomed to represent characters in the comedies of Sheridan, Goldsmith, Colman, Morton, Inchbald, Holcroft, and O'Keefe; even a *farcical* actor can no more be called a comedian than a caricaturist a historical painter.

We have academies for medicine and for music; why not have an academy for *acting*?—a school where the aspirant's mind may be properly cultivated before he enters on his arduous profession, and a *stage* where his powers may be tried and developed ere he comes under the lash of criticism.

Acting being a *practical* art, the attempt to teach the uncultivated mind is something like a man sowing seeds in the earth ere it has been ploughed and harrowed.

As the lamented nobleman has said "that the dramatic art may be erected into a gigantic instrument of education," then education on a proper and liberal basis ought to be established in this great country, so that the days of Kemble and Kean may be revived, and the immortal bard take his proper stand in the richest city in the world, casting into the shade those trifling dramas that now monopolise the attention of the public.

The Kean banquet has been brought forth in

consequence of education—the education which Edmund Kean gave his son; but had that son been brought up in the “school of adversity,” like his father, the eulogiums of the great Colonial Minister on the stage would have been lost; nor should I have to record another triumph to the dramatic art which took place in 1862, at St. James’s Hall, when the splendid testimonial by Hunt and Roskell, valued at 1500 guineas, was presented to Charles Kean.

The enthusiastic friend of Charles Kean, the lamented Duke of Newcastle, was to have presided on this occasion; but state business detaining his Grace at Windsor, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, W. E. Gladstone, took his place, and delivered the following eloquent speech:

“We cannot treat the Drama as among the light amusements of the world. It belongs to no particular age, to no particular country, to no particular race, and to no particular form of religion. It has gone through all races, all countries, all ages, and all forms of religion; and even Religion herself has not always disdained to find in it a direct handmaid for the attainment of her own purposes. Whether that connection be direct or indirect, its social and its moral effects must always be of the greatest importance. No student of *human nature*, no observer of society, no historian

that tells the events of the world and aims to give a true picture of mankind, ever can omit it from his view.

“If it be true that the drama has thus been characteristic of the whole history of man, most certainly it is not in this country where we can assign to it a *secondary* place, when we recollect that the land to which we belong, and the land in which we live, has given birth to the greatest dramatist of the whole world.

“But I must not omit to remind you that in this very country, where the drama has taken such deep root, we have often had to lament that the practice of the art has been associated with elements that are unworthy of it; and we have to look to Mr. Kean as one who has laboured in a noble and holy cause, in endeavouring to dissociate the noble pursuit of the drama from elements that could be thought to partake of moral and social contamination. That is a work to which he has given many anxious years and all the energies of his mind; and I must say that what I have seen of the profession, chiefly in his person, has convinced me that there are few that can compete with it in the anxieties and efforts that it brings to those men who pursue it as every work and profession ought to be pursued—namely, with their whole understanding and with their whole

hearts. Indeed, my poor duties are light compared to those of Mr. Kean."

At this compliment Mr. Kean, who stood on the left of Mr. Gladstone, gave a most ambiguous smile, that spoke unutterable things.

"If this be so, we have good cause for renewing on this occasion the expression of the sentiments which we uttered largely at the former time of meeting in this hall; and after the few words I have said to you I have only to express the earnest desire that the expression of our feelings may be to Mr. Kean himself both an acknowledgment for the past and an encouragement for the future; that in all his labours he may be cheered and sustained by the recollection of the manner in which his countrymen and countrywomen have twice crowded the benches of this hall to do him honour; and that the effect of these manifestations may not be limited to himself alone, but that they may operate also as incentives to others to walk in his steps, and, like him, to engage hereafter in unremitting efforts to improve the tone and to elevate the character of the stage of this country." (*Tremendous cheering.*)

At the end of which Mr. Kean arose and delivered a speech, rare indeed on such an occasion in regard to pathos and poetic beauty:

"Mr. Gladstone, my lords, ladies, and gentle-

men,—No language of mine can express the emotions which your kindness has this day kindled in my breast, and feeble indeed would be any attempt on my part to describe the mingled sentiments of pride and gratitude with which I am at this moment inspired. So incompetent do I find myself for such a task, that were I not anxious to escape the censure due to discourtesy, I would fain take refuge in the words of our great poet :

‘ Silence is the perfectest herald of joy.’

At the same time I should be unworthy of the high honour you have conferred on me, as devoid of all human sensibility, were I to conceal the profound gratification I experience in receiving this manifest assurance that my efforts to promote the best interests of our national drama have been crowned with the approbation of the brilliant and distinguished company by which I am now surrounded.” (*Cheers.*) “ Precious to me are the words that have just fallen from the illustrious statesman who has done me the honour of presiding on this occasion, and welcome to my heart the demonstration of feeling which those words aroused throughout this hall.” (*Great cheering.*) “ It has ever been my earnest desire that England’s mightiest dramatist should be presented to the world in a manner worthy in every respect of

his innate beauty and grandeur—that each performance should represent ‘the very age and body of the time’—where architecture and costume should alike be appropriate, either in their splendour or simplicity.” (*Cheers.*) “While combining pictorial art with the finest poetry known to mankind, by assisting the delusion with regard to place and period, by holding up the mirror of history, I had hoped that, without detracting from the power of the actor or the importance of the author, to have rendered the stage over which I had control something more than a mere vehicle of transient amusement—an elevating and instructive recreation. If there be any who suppose that I had intended to have addressed myself merely to the eyes, my purpose has been perfectly misunderstood; for I meant but to pass through that gateway of the mind, and appeal to the *understanding** of my audience. In the carrying out of this project I soon became aware of the difficulties I had to surmount, and of the sacrifices I should be called upon to make; for the limited space within the girdle of those walls where I attempted to picture the great historical events that are intertwined with the progress and glories of our country, and those delightful fancies that are embalmed in our

* This idea of Mr. Kean's may be called Utopian, and may account for his non-success in a financial sense.

literature, precluded all hope, however successful, of my ever reaping any return beyond that harvest of gratification which I gathered from the recognition of my exertions, and from the consciousness of my own heart that in all I did I was paying the tribute of my boundless admiration and gratitude to the genius of that marvellous writer in whose suite and service it was my glory to labour—to that genius which had illuminated my course and conducted me to whatever fame and fortune I might have acquired. I am happy and proud to say that my efforts to advance an object which to me seemed so desirable received the cordial support of my constant friends, the public” (*loud cheers*), “to whom now and ever I owe a debt far beyond the means of repayment.” (*Cries of “No, no,” and loud cheering.*) “For the public breath has wafted me over the stormy waves of a long professional career—the public voice has placed me where I am; and I now am encouraged to believe that the public approval is manifested in this splendid testimonial.” (*Cheers, long and loud.*)

“I am sure you will pardon me if I give utterance to one reflection, which is accompanied with the most intense satisfaction—the reflection that for this priceless testimony of your good opinion I am indebted, in the first instance, to

those who were the companions of my boyhood, who walked with me under the shade of those 'distant spires and antique towers' so revered by every Etonian." (*Cheers.*)

"When I entered this hall my eyes recognised many of the old familiar faces, linking the present with the past, reviving the sweet memory of youth, recalling those happy days before we were awakened to the world's stern realities, replacing me as it were in those loved fields

'Where once my careless childhood strayed,
A stranger yet to pain.'

Here Mr. Kean paused, being affected to tears, while the audience sympathised and applauded enthusiastically.

"But, let me add, it is no momentary bliss I now experience, but an impression never to be effaced from my heart while the stream of life flows through these veins." (*Cheers.*)

"From this hour you enable me to regard the cares and anxieties I have undergone 'in the world's broad field of battle' as the victor views his retreating and beaten enemy. If in life's campaign I have had to contend with many, many opposing influences, your favour and generous sympathy have ever been at hand to lift me above all the difficulties that opposed my progress, saved

me from defeat, healed every wound that had been inflicted by hostile shafts, and at the last rewarded me far beyond my poor deserts—allowing me to say, in the words of the great poet Dryden,

‘Rich the treasure,
Sweet the pleasure;
Sweet is pleasure after pain.’”

(*Cheers.*)

“As the warrior—when the fiery fight is heard no more, and the star of peace returns—bears on his breast the decorations which distinguish his services, with equal pride do I receive this inestimable symbol of honour”—(pointing to the testimonial)—“which to me will be while I live the emblem of my victory, and when I die the memorial of my name.” (*Loud cheers.*)

“But, ladies and gentlemen, it is not on *me* alone that you have this day shed the light of happiness: there is *another*, besides myself, who feels the inspiration of this moment—whose pulse beats with a quicker throb—whose heart pours over in its fulness as a fountain of gladness, but whose joy is only reflected, for she rejoices not in her own but in her husband’s honour.”

Here a scene of great enthusiasm took place, every eye being turned towards Mrs. Kean in the gallery over the platform, who gave indications

that she was affected, while vociferous cheers burst from all parts of the hall.

“While conveying my heartfelt gratitude to all, I feel that my especial thanks are due to the Chancellor of the Exchequer for presiding on this occasion, and paying so humble an individual as myself the distinguished compliment which his presence now confers.

“Before I conclude I must admit that I am painfully conscious how inadequate to the honour I receive are the words I have spoken” (*cries from the whole of the audience, “No, no”*); and you will pardon me if, in the poverty of my own language, I borrow from the wealth of Shakespeare, who teaches me to say, in this simple phrase,

‘I can no other answer make,
But thanks, and thanks, and ever thanks.’”

CHAPTER VIII.

Professor Blackie on Dramatic Literature—Tax levied in France for the poor on all Theatrical Amusements—French Pawnbrokers—Government grants to French Theatres—Rachel as a girl singing in the *cafés*—Peg Woffington—Theatrical Fund in France—A poor Musician—Salaries of Tom Cooke, Kean, George Frederick Cooke, Garrick, &c.—Social and domestic subjects of England and France—English Clowns and Pantomimes introduced into Paris.

SCOTLAND has in her time produced many warriors, but she has remained till the present day to send forth a champion in the cause of the drama, and one who has won golden opinions by a speech that does honour both to his head and his heart.

Professor Blackie delivered the following in Edinburgh, in 1864, at the Working Man's Institute :

“ I would warn you, that if you did not come to the club-room for rational amusement—such as singing or dancing, if you liked, or, yes, even for theatricals—you probably might soon be found in some bad place. Talking of theatricals, there

were some clergymen who were quite superstitious in regard to that subject.* They objected to the theatre; they saw something wrong there, and thought it was a sin to go near one. Now that was all nonsense. The theatre was introduced into Christendom by the ancient Church. In heathen times it was the pulpit; and undoubtedly the stage was the natural pulpit—the most intellectual of all pulpits.

“I suppose the most sensible part of the clergy objected to the theatre not in regard to its principles, but on account of some of its accompaniments in these our days—effects of modern times.

“Well, in spite of all that, and in spite of all the clergy in the world, *I* will go to the theatre.

“I think we might have private theatricals in connection with this Institute. I suppose the clergy would not object to that; for the clergy who would not allow their children to go to *public balls* had, as I have seen myself, very splendid balls *in their own houses*. On the same principle, though they objected to public theatres, surely they could not object to private theatricals.

“A number of people object to a theatre not

* Yes, there is one *close* to Carlisle that I could name, noted for his hatred to the noble art.

because they were too pious, but because they were too stupid.

“For instance, there is no amusement that requires more talent and intellect, or has more elegant kind of work mixed up with it than the representative character.

“So when in time we get a larger hall, I hope you will get up a private theatre, and perhaps I may come myself and play some part with you.

“I have long wished to get up a theatre in my own house, but the salaries of Scotch professors are so small that I could not afford to get a larger house; and then we are so hard-worked in winter months there is no time for amusement, and in summer my recreation is to walk over the Highland hills, singing Scotch songs.”

I can fancy the Professor, bonnet on, trudging over the Grampians, singing ‘Scots wha hae.’

Mr. Blackie, like the Chancellor of the Exchequer, alludes to the elements of evil connected with the drama—evils that must be abolished.

There was a time when a Scotch clergyman was deprived of his living for writing the most beautiful tragedy of modern days, the tragedy of ‘Douglas;’ but Mr. Home was not deserted and abandoned to want, for George III. settled a pension of 300*l.* a-year on the talented author.

The father of Charles Kean is still remem-

bered by the French people. A short time after the death of the great tragedian, a drama was produced at the Porte St. Martin Theatre in Paris, called 'Kean,' or 'Génie et Désordre.' The hero was personated by the celebrated Frederick Le Maitre. This piece is not extinct yet.

Blanchard Jerrold has given to the public lately the fruits of a trip to Paris, and with graphic skill has touched on the mode of feeding the poor in the capital of the empire. The French being a military people, the rations of the poor are as much looked after as the rations of the army. All are under a board of control, and on such principles that the food intended for the needy has not the slightest chance of filling the larders of the guardians. Every thing is managed with the same precision as in the army and naval departments in England.

As there are no poor's rates in Paris, the fund is supported by a TAX ON THE RECREATIONS of the people, and by the profits of the *monts-de-piété*. Each theatre in Paris pays a certain sum yearly to the poor. Every concert, every performance of any description, pays so much in the 100 francs taken at the doors. Having in my time contributed to the fund, I can speak confidently on the matter.

The highways and byeways of Paris are freed

from the presence of aged and crippled objects seeking alms; and all persons found shelterless at night are taken to the regularly-constituted asylum provided by the authorities. Here their wants are attended to; and if young children are among them, their heartless parents are sought out and punished.

No singing is allowed in the *cafés*, but any person that pleases can hire a private room, where he may amuse himself for the whole of the evening. Street-minstrels are allowed to enter the *cafés* and exercise their talent. I have heard a woman sing Rossini's buffo song, 'Lo! the Fac-totum,' in splendid style. It would have been cheering if a certain Figaro in our Italian Opera could approach this humble *chanteuse française*.

Now in regard to the *monts-de-piété*, or pawn-brokers, I can also elucidate, having, while in Paris, paid a visit to so necessary a personage. The staff of officials are: First, the crier, or clerk, who attends entirely to the booking department. The metals, jewelry, plate, watches, and clocks, come under the inspection of an adept in such matters. A second officer devotes his attention to the arts and furniture of every description. A third understands mathematical instruments, machinery, and tools in general. The fourth—a native of Rouen—is *au fait* in cottons, linens,

stuffs, lace, woollens, hosiery, silks, cloths, boots, shoes, hats, and every thing connected with male or female attire.

Those pawnbrokers are no way engaged in commerce as shopkeepers; they are hired servants, and are expected to act faithfully between the public and the charity.

Since the great increase in the population of Paris, the four pawnbrokers' offices may be doubled or trebled; and although they are called "necessary evils," yet in great cities, where there are great trials to undergo, they cannot be dispensed with. Those who have visited Paris must have observed the extreme temperance of the people. This is *chiefly* owing to their recreations—to the theatres. The theatre is considered the *first* object as a civilising power after the toils of the day. Here, on witnessing a well-acted play, the mind can luxuriate free from the vices and evils of the bottle; and that this mode of recreation should *really* be an instrument of temperance, no drinks whatever are allowed to be sold within the walls of a theatre. Those who cannot sit for three or four hours without drinking are at liberty to go out and satisfy their thirst.

The theatres in Paris are under an administration called "Le Direction des Beaux Arts." The President is the Minister of the Interior. I

GOVERNMENT GRANTS TO PARIS THEATRES. 217

have a document by me now relating to the theatres during the reign of Louis Philippe, with the signature of Duchatel as President. The Vice-President is always a veteran actor, being more *au fait* in dramatic matters than statesmen or lawyers.

This administration was formed to protect the rights of the theatres, and preserve their interests intact, by never permitting any one erecting on his premises a stage for the purpose of singing, dancing, posturing, or any thing *approaching* to dramatic performances.

There are four theatres in Paris that receive government grants :

The grand Opéra or Académie Impériale	270,000f. per an.
The Théâtre Française	270,000 „
L'Opéra Comique	270,000 „
Italian Opera	270,000 „
L'Odéon	100,000 „

The grand opera in Paris is the French or National Opera House. Previous to the establishment of this theatre, the Italian was the first in the city ; but a number of men, celebrated for their musical skill, combined together, and erected a theatre for the encouragement of native talent, where no operas should be performed unless by French composers.

Of course great difficulties were to be got over,

and great prejudices were to be encountered, as the opinion was abroad that it was a matter of impossibility to rival the Land of Song. However, as the enterprisers were not of a *common* order of men, as they were profound musicians, and absolutely understood not only the music of their *own* country, but that of both Germany and Italy, an opera was placed on the stage the first night of opening, that was so distinct in itself, and so original in its construction, that the efforts of the National Operatic Company were crowned with most complete success; and in order to render the theatre of superior attraction, a staff of dancers were obtained, and a school for the Terpsichorean art established on such principles as bids defiance to every thing in any other nation.

By keeping entirely to native abilities in every department of the French opera, it has gained the mastery over the Italian company, and reduced it to such a position that, unless very extraordinary exertions are used, the Italian Opera will disappear altogether, like the classic dramatic writers of bygone times, serving for the aged to refer to.

It is but right and proper that the grand opera-house should be in the language of the country, else it becomes a matter of *sound*, being a performance in an *unknown* tongue—unknown, at *least*, to the major part of the audience.

The speech which Earl Russell delivered at the Royal Literary Fund Dinner alluded to something of this sort. His lordship said: "He lamented that English literature has not yet obtained that prominence which it ought to have in our English education. Our young men are taught to acquire a knowledge of Homer, Virgil, Horace, and Ovid, and why should they not be made equally acquainted with Shakespeare, Milton, and Dryden?" This is as much as to say, "Why should not our native language and music be as much sustained and upheld as those of foreign countries?"

'Tis true, we owe every thing to Italy, for she was the inventress of music—of scientific music. The gamut and counterpoint were brought forth by the inspiration of religion in the Church.

Yet still there was a native music in these islands long before Guido or Palestrina. Giraldus Cambrensis, in the time of Henry II., speaks of the music of Ireland, and her harpists. In the days of the divine bard there were the ballads and madrigals of England; and if we go back even as recently as George III., we shall find in the works of Arne, Shield, Moorhead, Davy, and Sterne compositions that, if introduced in our operatic attempts, might assist in forwarding the *cause of our national music*.

England, I am certain, can achieve what the French have accomplished, the permanent establishment of a national opera-house. We have the materials; for we have three distinct styles of music, the English, Irish, and Scotch. In regard to the latter, one evening at Covent Garden—the Mellon's concerts—when the ballad of 'Within a mile o' Edinburgh Toun' was struck up by the orchestra, the audience gave a round of applause. This would not have been the case if it had been 'Di tanti palpiti.' Why was it? Because the people understood it, and that beautiful melody came home to their hearts. It is a gross error to imagine the sterling ballads of these islands will not be always welcomed, even in a foreign nation. When I witnessed the opera of 'Martha,' the most exciting air in it was the Irish melody of 'The last rose of summer.' It is to be lamented that the composer of the opera had not obtained a correct copy of the ballad, for it is decidedly wrong in the beginning, and differs almost as much from Tom Moore's edition as 'The Cruiskeen Lawn,' now sung in 'The Colleen Bawn,' does from the original.

The administrators of the theatres in Paris have the managers as much under control as the performers. No director of a theatre must announce an amateur, that he may amuse himself,

in some first-rate character; nor can a manager allot a trifling character to any young man from the *bureau* or *atelier*, or a mademoiselle fresh from the boarding-school, without incurring the risk of a heavy penalty. The authorities in a metropolitan theatre very properly consider that all the staff should be proficient, else it is like vending that which has no intrinsic value.

Amateur acting is not in great vogue in Paris. There is only one theatre for unfledged talent, and that is in the Rue Chantier, Chaussée d'Antin, not far from the house where Napoleon resided in his early career.

During my rambles in Paris, I encountered a juvenile minstrel in an English tavern, "Woods," Place Favart. This minstrel with her guitar often amused the company after dinner with her vocal and instrumental talent, and this girl, scarcely fourteen, became the Siddons of her country, Mademoiselle Rachel. If France has produced such an extraordinary character, Ireland may be quoted as a nation that has afforded to the metropolis of England an actress reared in poverty, who not only satisfied the critics of London by her performance of Lady Macbeth, but also in comedy cast into shade the Roscius of the age, David Garrick, in Sir Harry Wildair. This was Margaret Woffington. Some idea may be formed of her qualities

by the monody written by Hoole, the translator of
'Tasso:'

"Blest in each art, by nature born to please,
With beauty, sense, elegance, and ease ;
Whose piercing genius studied all mankind,
And grasp'd the flights of Shakespeare's mind,
In every sense of comic humour known,
In sprightly sallies wit was all thy own.
Whether you seem'd the *Cit's* more humble wife,
Or shone in *Townly's* higher sphere of life,
Alike thy spirit knew each turn of wit,
And gave new force to all the poet writ.
Nor was thy worth to public scenes confined,
Thou knewest the noblest feelings of the mind ;
Thy ears were ever open to distress,
Thy ready hand was ever stretch'd to bless ;
Thy breast humane for each unhappy felt,
Thy heart for others' sorrows prone to melt,
In vain did envy point her scorpion stings—
In vain did malice shake her blasting wings—
Each generous breast disdained the displeasing tale,
And cast o'er every fault oblivion's veil."

She died in London in 1760, aged forty years.

Since Margaret Woffington's day, now 104 years, there has never been a comic actress capable of sustaining such a character as Lady Macbeth before a London audience. This, the most difficult of all Shakespearian parts, was considered by the critics a first-rate performance; and in regard to her genius for comedy, Garrick, who was so popular in Sir Harry Wildair, gave up the part

When Woffington appeared in it. The bill with Miss Woffington's name inserted for Lady Macbeth, at Covent Garden Theatre, I have had in my possession. It is now deposited in the archives of the Dramatic College, for the inspection of the curious. This extraordinary Irish actress was also celebrated for her acting of Queen Katharine, Henry III., and Constance in 'King John.'

But Margaret Woffington had some training in her youth. Madame Violante, celebrated in Dublin on the *corde volante*, gave her tuition in elegant dancing, and introduced her *protégée* in a duo on the double rope. I believe that was her first step in the dramatic art. At ten years of age she gained celebrity in Captain Macheath; but when she arrived at maturity, she gave up such arts, and appeared in Macbeth.

Although Margaret Woffington was brought up in poverty and ignorance; although the great tragic actress of France, Mademoiselle Rachel, was ignorant of her letters at sixteen years of age, yet these are only solitary cases of genius bursting forth without the aid of the schoolmaster.

I have already said that some mode of education on a liberal scale ought to be established, so that the aspirant after histrionic fame may have every advantage to enable him to embody dramatic works of the first order.

It might be asked, have they in France such an institution for the histrionic art? Certainly not—the national education of the country being so wisely arranged that the son of the poor man can be as well educated as the heir of the rich one. This is the reason Colbert became a state minister; Michael Chevalier another Privy Councillor; and Soult, once a private soldier, the representative of the majesty of France at the Coronation of Queen Victoria.

Although the Parisian theatres are compelled to contribute to the poor of Paris, yet they are not unmindful of the aged and needy portion of the dramatic art.

Each theatre has a fund for the support of the infirm and destitute members of the establishment, and this fund is maintained by monthly subscriptions, and a tariff of half-a-franc, or 5*d.*, on each order presented at the doors; so that in Paris there are no *free* admissions to the theatres, and the money so paid is converted to a good and laudable purpose, and the public are content.

During my experience in the profession I have often reflected on the free-admission system in London, and considered, in a financial sense, it was decidedly wrong. A theatre may be compared to a shop—a fruit-shop, for instance. How would the master look if a person was to step in

and say, "Pray let me have a taste of your grapes; they look very tempting"? Might not the proprietor reply, "The grapes are a part of my property; I paid money for them"? And so may the manager say when solicited for an order, "The light, fiddlers, actors, and servants, all cost money: they are the ends and means whereby I live; and if you want an order, you must pay something for it." Yes, something ought to be paid at the door when the order is presented. If it was sixpence for the admission of two persons, that sixpence might assist in forming a fund, and prevent many a casualty in the metropolis to members of the dramatic art. Within seven years there have been two suicides committed by actors in consequence of a reverse of fortune; and if a fund were so established, it would be really gratifying to all philanthropic lovers of the drama.

A sad case occurred in Paris some time ago, that proves musicians are not so well looked after in the capital of the Empire as actors. The case was that of the leader of the orchestra of the Opéra Comique laying violent hands on himself in consequence of destitution. The following letter was found by the side of the body, written in a clear and legible hand:

"DEAR BRETHREN,—Formerly I had talent,

and held a first position in the principal theatres in Paris.

"I remember the palmy days of the Opéra Comique, when it disdained the drumming and trumpeting and deafening noise in the circus.

"In former days sentimental harmony was in the ascendant, and penetrated the heart and soul.

"I earned a great deal of money, and I lived like most artists, freely; and now I am about to die, as many thoughtless and desperate characters have before me, and by my own hand.

"If ever this letter is read, let it be a lesson to the extravagant.

"Young people should remember the old proverb, '*Il faut conserver une poire pour la soif*'—A pear ought to be kept till you are thirsty.

"I neglected to do so, resting confident in the false security of flattering sycophants, not friends.

"The compassion of those with whom we have worked is a wretched thing to fall back upon, and galling to the sensitive mind, as it is sure to bring contempt, or pity, which is the same thing.

"No! my pride urges me to die a thousand deaths, rather than lower my nature by craving help from those inferior to me in education and ability.

"Although scarcely able to hold the bow in consequence of age and infirmity, I preferred to

exercise my talent as a street-minstrel. This degraded state I endured for a time, and it administered to my daily wants; but at last I became so enfeebled that I was compelled to abandon it, and tried my fortune in the lottery, with the hope that a prize might turn up to enable me to retire and end my life here like a Christian. In this I was disappointed.

“But as it is, I must yield to fate. My hour is come. Oh, heavens!—hard alternative!

“Pray for the old musician.”

A jury might bring this case in “temporary insanity;” but, after penning such a rational letter, there could be no doubt he was in his perfect senses.

A mad person cannot count up to twenty. A mad person, instead of using a knife, razor, poison, or pistol, for self-destruction, would attempt the act with a fan, a roll of paper, or any other harmless instrument.

Shakespeare has pictured madness to the life in *Lear*—what has he not pictured?—and the aged king giving up his kingdom to his unnatural daughters was itself an act of insanity.

But the fatal end of this musician, the conductor of the *Opéra Comique*, was brought about by circumstances over which he had decidedly a

control. This man held a position in Paris similar to that of Costa in London. No doubt, in the French capital they were not so lavish with their money as to give a musician 50*l.* a-week; but say this ill-fated leader had received 20*l.* a-week—and plenty too—out of such an income as that he might have laid by enough for the winter of life, when the world looks cold.

The idea of a leader receiving 20*l.* a-week! Why, the two best leaders of their age—John Loder and Tom Cooke—never got more than 5*l.* a-week, and they considered themselves very well paid.

George Cooke, the actor—whose Richard, at Covent Garden, always filled the house—had only 20*l.* a-week; and Edmund Kean was originally engaged at 9*l.* a-week. Even Garrick, as an actor, never received more than 10*l.* a-week.

In those days the drama flourished better when moderate salaries were paid to the really *great* actors, than when secondary ones demanded enormous terms.

The managers of the large houses were enabled in those palmy days to keep an efficient staff of actors for tragedy, comedy, opera, pantomime, and farce.

In the days of Sheridan, Colman, Morton, and O'Keefe, but little was borrowed from the French.

Those great and original writers were entirely independent of foreign aid; but we cannot say as much for an American writer in 1818, Howard Payne, who gained a reputation and a fortune in London by his adaptations from our lively neighbours.

The drama of 'Charles II., or the Merry Monarch,' produced at Covent Garden, was announced as the composition of Payne; while at the same time it was originally performed at the Théâtre Français in Paris during the first Napoleon's reign, under the title of 'La Jeunesse d'Henri V.'

This title was substituted instead of Charles II., in consequence of a law being in existence against any drama that alluded to an exiled monarch.

'Clari, or the Maid of Milan,' another of Howard Payne's pieces, was founded on a grand ballet originally performed at the Académie Royale. The plot and characters are the same as in the opera originally represented at Covent Garden, when Miss Maria Tree created such a sensation in Clari.

'Love in Humble Life,' performed at Drury Lane, was translated and arranged for the stage by Rutherford, Payne's literary hack; yet when published, Payne was announced as the author.

This talented but unfortunate man translated

the 'Black Forest,' which had a run at the Wells, but his name was never inserted in the bills as the author, his employer again taking that honour.

Rutherford had been an actor in the West Indies and in the United States, and in an evil hour left spots where fortune was kind, and crossed the Atlantic for the last time, to pine and suffer, and at last to perish—where many a brother scribe has succumbed—in a wretched garret near Drury Lane. Scarcely had the unfortunate Rutherford been in the grave twenty-four hours, when a special messenger arrived in London from a wealthy brother with that assistance which for years had been withheld.

It came too late. The object was removed, and the inflexible relative was left to the enjoyment of the feelings which such conduct engenders.

Those vehicles of terror—the reckless driving of which has sacrificed so many lives—the cabs and omnibuses, owe their origin to the French. The cabriolet was first used in Paris a short time before the first Revolution in 1789; and the omnibus, the invention of a native of Nantz, came into notice in 1827, and ran between the Madeleine and the Place de la Bastille.

The cabriolet was introduced by the noblesse, and caused great ill-feeling among the people in consequence of furious driving; and this continued

till stringent laws were enacted to protect the aged and young from fatal accidents. Those accidents seldom or never occurred in the lengthened streets, but in the sharp turnings of the lanes and by-ways.

If England has followed France in many things, she has led the van in that great invention which has brought London and Paris within eleven hours of one another instead of a hundred; for it took generally four days in the voyage from one metropolis to the other before steam was employed.

In 1827, while London was brilliantly illuminated with gas, Paris was almost buried in darkness; and that great desideratum for the foot-passenger, the flagged *trottoir*, was entirely unknown except in the Rue Vivienne, near Galignani's Library, where about forty feet had been laid down.

An English gentleman who had lived in the neighbourhood many years might be seen daily promenading and luxuriating on it of an afternoon, fancying himself in the capital of England.

Those English who had resided in Paris several years, when asked their opinion respecting the introduction of gas and pavement as in London, declared positively "that the French would never deviate from their old ways; and although conscious of the great utility of gas-light, and its superiority over oil, yet economical notions would

predominate over any idea of public benefit." Yet in 1843, when I paid Paris a second visit, I found the city as brilliantly illuminated with gas as London, and the flagged pavement laid down in every quarter of the town, to the no small delight of the British residents.

Several attempts have been made to ingraft on the French a taste for the comic pantomime, but all have failed. The first was in 1827, when the noted harlequin and pantaloon of the day, Ellar and T. Blanchard, were engaged at Franconi's Cirque. They were accompanied by a good clown, Southey, —not the poet, but his brother.

Although Christmas comes but once a year, yet our lively neighbours are not merry; they are in the same mood at that period as on any other; there are no preparations for the plum-pudding; no looking out for the beef; no cheering announcement at the theatres that the pantomime is in prospect, and the glare and glitter will be most gorgeous. Indeed, in regard to this sort of amusement of fun and frolic the French are inflexible, and consider it as mere child's-play.

Certainly there was a time in England when the same opinion was held by the mass of the people; but that is many years ago, before Shakespeare, Beaumont and Fletcher, Massinger, Otway, and Dryden, were cast aside for light and airy treats.

CHAPTER IX.

Kean engaged at the Olympic for 4*l.* a-week, but secured by Drury Lane—The Management clear 18,000*l.* the first Season, and are saved from Bankruptcy—John Kemble's failure in Gloucestershire, and Sir Giles Overreach—Macready kissed on the Stage by a Mob of excited Frenchmen — Second Attempt to establish the English Drama in France in 1844 —Sensible Arrangement as regards Talent and Salaries on the Parisian Stage—Paganini swindled at Birmingham—Novel Arrangement about Benefits in Paris—Marshal Ney —Père-la-Chaise—The Napoleon Museum—The Irish Brigade.

THERE is no questioning the assertion of the late Duke of Newcastle at the "Kean Banquet," that the "legitimate drama civilises and forms the social status of a people." If that be the case, every sort of trivial amusement that interferes with the interest of those inspired dramas bequeathed to posterity by our renowned writers ought to be cast aside, and reason and sense take precedence of those which only serve for the present and are incapable of affording reflection or of elevating the mind.

With the exception of the Théâtre Français

in Paris, all the others are celebrated for the flimsy structure of their pieces. I do not allude to the Académie Impériale or Grand Opera, or to the Opéra Comique—I mean the vaudeville and melodramatic theatres; yet I admit the ability with which their dramas are written, and the ability displayed by the actors; still they are trifling in comparison to the tragedies and comedies of Racine, Corneille, Voltaire, Molière, Beaumarchais, and Dumas; and those who visit Paris and feel a desire to witness the legitimate works of France can only enjoy that treat at one theatre in the city, and that is the Français.

The small theatres in the suburbs of Paris display no lack of talent on the part of the artists; and the audiences seem to have equal appreciation with those of the fashionable houses. As a proof of this, I attended the little suburban theatre at Montmartre, and witnessed the performance of a young actress in a vaudeville founded on Voltaire's youthful days, in which she displayed talent of no mean order; and though pronounced by judges the Vestris of the French stage, she merely formed part of the company of one of the most trifling theatres near Paris. This is no uncommon circumstance either in France or England, as luck or personal influence has often more to do in the career of a performer than real merit.

In 1814, one of the most trivial theatres in London at that period, though not at the present day, — the Olympic — very nearly got possession of the first actor of the age—Edmund Kean. An engagement with the manager — Elliston — was signed for the *season at a salary of 4l. a-week for principal melodramatic characters.* This agreement was entered into before any chance appeared for Drury Lane; and many walks and many interviews took place before the manager relaxed in his claim upon the man whose acting of Richard III. alone the first season brought 18,000*l.* to the treasury, and saved the theatre from bankruptcy. If Elliston had had the slightest idea of Kean's talent, he was the last man to yield; for, like Shylock, he "would have the bond;" in fact, there was not a member of the profession alive to Kean's transcendent abilities. It might be asked, "Was he himself?" There is no doubt of it, or why did he labour with certain characters to make them stand out in such bold relief and throw into shade the attempts of the tragedian John Kemble, when the rival house pitted against him that classic actor who then had possession of the town? Kemble tried his powers both in Richard and Sir Giles Overreach, and failed to shake the firm hold the little great man had got of the public in a few nights. But if he had appeared at the Olympic

in 'Count Romoldi,' or in 'The Blood - Red Knight,' Edmund Kean's name would not have become a "household word" when 'The Merchant of Venice' and 'Richard III.' are the topics of conversation in these latter days.

A splendid tragedian—Huntley—who was endowed with person, judgment, voice, conception, and fire, was sacrificed at the minor theatres. Huntley was the leading actor in Dublin in 1815. At that period I saw him play Sir Edward Mortimer, in 'The Iron Chest;' and with the exception of Edmund Kean, I have never seen the part so brilliantly acted. But the ranting at the Coburg, in the extravagant melodramas produced there, entirely destroyed his style, and he sunk in the judgment of the judicious. Before he degenerated, he made a trial at Covent Garden in a secondary part,—Bassanio, in 'The Merchant of Venice;' but the impression was not very strong. Certainly his friends were surprised at his selecting such a character, totally unfit for his spirited style; and besides, the part had been represented by Charles Kemble for years, and made entirely his own; had Huntley however appeared in Colman's 'Iron Chest,' a successful result must have crowned his efforts; as it was, he fell like many other talented men, and died broken down in mind and body.

Another tragedian of great promise—Meggott,

from the Land of Cakes — made his *début* in 'Richard III.' at Covent Garden, in opposition to Edmund Kean, and most signally failed. This was a most unfortunate selection ; for Meggott in person was the beau-ideal of Hamlet, Romeo, and Alexander ; and if he had chosen any of those characters, his success would have been certain.

Every thing was now altered in public taste, and the Apollo-figure that was all the rage previous to Kean's appearance was now a drawback ; and special messengers were despatched to scour the country round for short, sinister, dark-looking actors, in order to crush the powerful attraction at Drury Lane ; but all the efforts of Covent Garden failed.

In July 1828 the campaign in Paris for English theatricals was brought to an end. 'Othello' was performed on the last night ; Macready represented the Moor, and was called before the curtain at the conclusion of the tragedy. About fifty of the audience—all French—jumped on the stage and encircled the tragedian ; some threw their arms round his neck and almost smothered the renowned tragedian with kisses. However, the liberty taken with the actor carried its punishment with it, as the faces of these enthusiastic admirers bore visible signs to the delighted auditors that they had come in contact with the sooty Moor.

Many performers have considered popularity sufficient to guarantee success in management, and risked all their savings, and become bankrupt in a brief space of time. This was the case with Miss Smithson in Paris, when she speculated at the Favart Theatre in English theatricals. On the first night her ardent admirers kept aloof, and her attempt to establish the British drama entirely fell to the ground. Disgusted with dramatic life, she abandoned the stage, and died in Paris, as the wife of M. Berlioz, the celebrated musical composer, who has had the distinguished honour of dining with the Emperor of the French at St. Cloud.

In 1844 Mitchell of Bond Street engaged a staff of actors, with Macready at their head ; but this speculation lasted only a month.

Perhaps M. Laurent possessed more advantages than any other individual to command success in Paris. Having the staff of the Italian theatre, together with the theatre itself, at his disposal, placed him in a position free from the risk and outlay incurred by Mitchell, or any other speculator.

Abbott, stage-manager of the English theatre, and Broad, his deputy, tried their fortune in Tours, Nantz, and Bordeaux ; but the scheme was not a profitable one, in consequence of the paucity of British located in those interesting cities.

Abbott and Broad crossed the Atlantic. The

former was unfortunate in the New World, and died in Montreal; the latter too was equally unsuccessful, and died of a broken heart from disappointment in the States, without a friend or relative to soothe his closing hours.

Broad was a man of science, and had received in his native city—Cork—a liberal education as an architect; but the marshalling of the staff behind the scenes had greater influence with him than the raising of structures that might have handed down his name to future generations.

The prompter, like the actor, takes all his talent with him, and leaves not a vestige behind to remind the world that such a being ever existed; but the architect bequeathes a monument that may endure for centuries and receive the admiration of future ages. Although Broad's skill as an architect was not employed in any *lofty* structure in the metropolis, yet a building still exists sufficient to attest his abilities as a scientific builder; and this is the St. James's Theatre.

Chapman, another of the English company, sailed for America, and started as a floating manager on one of the rivers. He got possession of the hull of a vessel, and had it fitted up, *à la théâtre*, with stage, scenery, and boxes, and navigated one of the great rivers, stopping at each town, where he performed a certain period.

This novel system of contributing to the recreation of the people met with patronage, and fully answered the speculator's purpose.

Chapman was what is called a steady sensible actor, and was attached to Covent Garden several years.

Good actors, like a bold peasantry, when once destroyed are not to be replaced again. This was a startling fact at Covent Garden Theatre when Emery died, and Miss O'Neill, Liston, Miss M. Tree, Miss Stephens, Mrs. Davenport, Mrs. Egerton, Charles Young, William Farren, Richard Jones, William Blanchard, and Bartley retired from the great national establishment. Their places were never filled again.

The French certainly have a better system for preserving legitimate talent, which is proved in Paris by devoting one theatre (the Français) to the representation of tragedy and comedy, to the exclusion of vaudeville, melodrama, and all trifling pieces.

The theatres in the provinces are the property of the inhabitants of each town ; and when let, the lessee must deposit a sum of money in the bank in order to guarantee the performers' salaries, while the people deposit another sum, so that the interest of the actors should not be jeopardised by failure on the part of managers or public.

Dramatic matters are not left to the tender mercies of speculators, but are so arranged that the only rational amusement should be the first consideration in each locality, and be preserved intact as a civilising power. By the regulations of the provincial theatres in France, it is a matter of impossibility for any unprincipled adventurer to dupe and victimise a set of performers, and then abandon them in a strange place with impunity.

Having traversed France from north to south, and from east to west, and from Lille to Pau, Basses Pyrénées, and from this romantic spot to Marseilles, *Maritimæ Alpes*, I can form a tolerably shrewd idea of the position of the French provincial actors. Being a member of the craft, freely and kindly was I admitted among them in their social hours. Without disguise both managers and actors let me into the secrets of the playing-house; and if I did not meet with any member of the histrionic art receiving 40*l.* nor even 20*l.* a-week, very few, I found, were existing on 30 or 40 francs. In general, the salaries of the actors in such towns as Dunkirk, Lille, Amiens, Havre, Rouen, Caen, Nantz, Bordeaux, Toulouse, and Marseilles, averaged from three napoleons to seven a-week. Although a napoleon in currency only amounts to 16*s.* 8*d.*, yet in the

rural districts of France it is quite equal to a sovereign; and consequently I consider the French actors are as a body much better paid than the English.

The term of their engagement is always for a year certain, optional on either side for renewal; and as long as they perform their duties to the satisfaction of the public the director or manager cannot discharge them.

But if a performer refuses a character in the line he is engaged for, and should absent himself from the theatre, he is then subject to the power of the authorities, and imprisoned as a deserter.

I have known a whole operatic company, in Belgium, conveyed to prison by a file of soldiers for refusing to perform.

A manager too is liable to a penalty if he does not raise the curtain at seven in the evening and let it fall at eleven.

By this wise regulation the people can get to bed in time, particularly those whose duties oblige them to be stirring with the lark, and live by their labour.

Those ill-organised dramatic companies that used to wander from town to town in the good old days of Roger Kemble are not visible in France, as the whole of the empire is laid out in circuits, and every manager must have a local habitation

and a name before he is allowed the direction of a *corps dramatique*.

No flying lecturer, conjuror, equestrian *troupe*, or singer can enter a town in order to exhibit without first arranging with the manager of the theatre, who must have a portion of the receipts before permission is granted.

Menageries are not allowed to travel, as all wild animals are kept at the *Jardin des Plantes* in Paris, where the public are admitted gratis to see them,—thus preventing dangerous exhibitions.

The hotels too are on a liberal scale in the provinces. The traveller cannot avoid noticing the marked difference between the two-franc dinner at the Palais Royale, Paris, and the two-franc dinner in Touraine, Bordeaux, or Pau; one is meagre, limited, and scanty, while that in Touraine, Bordeaux, or in the Pyrenees, is generous, *recherché*, and abundant. The wine, whether of Touraine or of the banks of the Garonne, would command in London 3s. a bottle; yet in the localities mentioned I have sat down and dined like the son of an "*Irish king*" for one-and-eight-pence, including the wine and dessert; and a gentleman can be accommodated at an hotel with room and board at five francs a day (4s. 2d.) *déjeuner à la fourchette*. I have frequently met the French actors at the *table d'hôte*; and have been

told, by taking tickets for a month's dinners, those sons of Thespis have dined at half price, that is 10*d.* daily. How different *les dîners des acteurs Français et les acteurs Irlandais la encompagnie de M. Harwood*, in 1813!

As the French actors are provided with their stage dresses in the provinces, the actresses are not neglected in that particular; for they are allowed 125 francs a-month for their wardrobe—as much as the managers of the Portsmouth and Southampton theatres 44 years ago allowed the actresses for services and wardrobe altogether.

Indeed I cannot see why the ladies in English provincial theatres should not be on an equality with lordly man, and have a wardrobe found or an equivalent accorded.

Regarding woman as the equal and very often the superior to man, I always admired the system in vogue in the shops in Paris, where the wife keeps the books; and, instead of superintending the culinary affairs in the kitchen, may be seen at the desk taking charge of the cash as it is received in the shop. The dinner and *cuisine* she leaves to the cook, and looks herself after the main chance.

“The *postes*,” or door-keepers, at the theatres are all confided to women, as the managers consider the softer sex more trustworthily than their lordly masters.

Take all the establishments in general in Paris, and women will be found executing the light and delicate work which employs well-dressed young men in London, particularly in drapers', dress-makers', jewellers', and grocers' *boutiques*. Women are better adapted for handling laces, lawns, fringes, ruffles, and tuckers, than men, whose horny and bony hands would be found more at home in handling the rifle or steering a gallant barque amidst the broad and briny ocean. At all events, there are many employments that females could undertake which the male portion of the community monopolise, far preferable to much of the drudgery which devoted woman is doomed to execute.

Too much praise cannot be given to those noble-hearted souls who have taken up the cause of the dressmakers; and if another Christian and noble party would come forward on behalf of the ill-paid shirtmakers, it would save many a victim to grasping employers from an early grave. The idea of a woman sitting from morning till night working on a shirt for 6*d.*, while the heartless seller of the article will make a profit on the transaction of 3*s.* 6*d.*! It is high time that something should be done in this quarter to remove the stain from the trade; and as the labourer is worthy of his hire, a fair and just price ought to be fixed

and arranged between both the master and servant.

I have departed for a little from the dramatic shop for that of the tradesman; but I trust there is a sufficient excuse when it is in the cause of the oppressed portion of the weaker vessel.

There was a time when the drama was without the aid of woman; and in those days of darkness educated females were rare indeed; man engrossed all the attention of the schoolmaster, and woman was left to the slavery of household affairs. But when knowledge and civilisation advanced, and the light of the histrionic art once more illumined the metropolis at the Restoration, it was then found that the drama was incomplete in representation without the assistance of the most lovely part of the creation. Many consider that the stage is an improper sphere for a female, and it has been condemned by Puritans and squeamish and worthless characters.

What position can equal the stage when a female is thrown on the world to gain a living? Can that of a governess, of a lady's-maid, or any other maid, be compared to it? Certainly not. The stage happens to be the only position where woman is perfectly independent of man, and where, by her talent and conduct, she obtains the favour of the public. She then enters the theatre

emancipated and disenthralled from the fears and heartburnings too often felt by those forced into a life of tuition and servitude. Then let the stage be no longer stigmatised by cant and prejudice; for, under proper discipline and legislation, it may be rendered a school for temperance, for virtue, politeness, and good-will to man in all the phases of life.

The starring system in France is not in such high vogue as in England, as each town considers the resident actors as their own, and consequently have no desire to witness those of the capital, unless indeed it should be a Talma, Mars, or Rachel, and then perhaps but few places can afford the terms for such luminaries.

Bordeaux, the great *entrepôt* of commerce, has lately had a meeting of its authorities in order to debate whether the enormous demand of an Italian *cantatrice*, Mademoiselle Patti, should be complied with—a demand of 400*l.* for one night.

From what I know of the French, I think they will look at their notes of a mille francs very often before they will give them for notes light as air, and as valueless after enjoyment. I do not wish to disparage Mademoiselle Patti, for I consider her a wonder; but singers equally as great—Catalani and Malibran—were quite content with a fourth part of Patti's demand, 100*l.* for one

night, and quite enough too; Catalani, the great Semiramide of her day, and Malibran, the beau-ideal of a Juliet and Desdemona—characters of a far higher grade than Zerlina and Rosina.

This affair at Bordeaux is not a private speculation, but a town matter, and very likely the demand will be resisted.

Two of the greatest actresses that have appeared on the London stage for the last century never asked more than 100*l.* per night, and these were Mrs. Siddons and Miss O'Neill.

Even the emperor of all fiddlers, Paganini, consented to appear in Dublin, in 1831, one week for 600*l.*, and performed in the morning and evening concerts. By these 17,000*l.* were taken, besides 1,500*l.* which were the net profits of a charity for the benefit of the Indigent Room-keepers of the city. When the money came to be divided, it amounted to *sevenpence-halfpenny* each individual; and as many displayed disappointment on receiving such a sum out of so enormous a receipt, it was ever after called the *Indignant Room-keepers' Benefit*. About this period (1831) the celebrated violinist met with a sore mishap in the town of Birmingham. One of those managers, a man of straw, by (for him) good luck got the control of the Birmingham Theatre; and although he possessed as much capital as others who began upon nothing,



yet he was brought to the verge of annihilation by continual empty benches. The unfortunate manager saw nothing but ruin staring him in the face, when a chance turned up to extricate him out of his difficulties.

The celebrated Paganini was in the Irish capital, and by a bold stroke the almost annihilated manager engaged the renowned emperor of all fiddlers for one night at the modest sum of one hundred guineas, while at the same time the undone manager was not in the actual possession of as many pence. The night was fixed, bills distributed, and every place in the boxes secured days previous to the performance.

The night at length arrived when Paganini was to enchant the people by his merry bit of wood, and relieve the undone manager from all his difficulties.

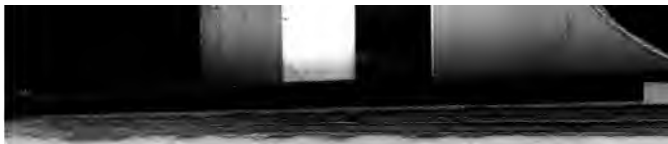
Some ill-looking stories having reached the signor or his secretary's ears respecting the solvency of the establishment, a determination was formed by the Italian *maestro* to have his hundred guineas before he appeared on the stage. This information was conveyed to the manager, who, not a whit disconcerted, told the secretary that as soon as the moneys were collected from the various doors he would settle.

The signor waited and waited, but no manager

made his appearance. At length the tidings reached the victimised Italian that the director was *non est*,—in plain English, he had taken all the money, entered a chaise, and fled no one knew whither. The time having arrived for Paganini's *concerto* on one string, the enraged signor declared he would not appear till his money was paid. This information was conveyed by the stage-manager to a densely-thronged theatre. The moment it was announced, the murmurs were not only loud but numerous. A gentleman in the stage-box arose and deliberately jumped on the stage, exclaiming, "Where is this Italian fiddler?" He was soon in his presence; and as this gentleman had spent some years in Italy, and was one of those characters not to be trifled with, he addressed the signor in choice Italian, and in language which had some effect upon the astonished musician. "Signor," cried he, "if you don't come forward before the public and play on that fiddle which lies on the table, I will smash it over your head." Paganini turned all the colours in the rainbow in a few seconds, and, as the song says,

"He shook and he shiver'd,
His teeth chatter'd and lips quiver'd."

And well he might, for that fiddle he regarded as much as he did his life's blood. That violin was like Mozart's "magic flute;" it came in a most



mysterious way into the possession of the signor, and was supposed to be made, not in Cremona, but in a place that shall be nameless.

No farther argument was needed, and Paganini descended from the manager's room to the stage; and although the audience were in an uproar, the moment the renowned violinist appeared all were calmed, and during his never-equalled and masterly performance on the instrument a pin might have been heard to drop, so ravished and astonished was every individual who possessed ears capable of appreciating his extraordinary execution.

When Paganini paid his first visit to Dublin, I heard him at that period perform, in the Theatre Royal, before the most brilliant audience I ever witnessed. The pit was made into stalls, and being the same price as the boxes—one guinea—the whole house appeared one mass of fashion. The first gallery was 10*s.* 6*d.*, and the upper 5*s.*

Instead of Paganini performing like some whom I have heard since, with a piano accompaniment, this great master stood on the stage in the front of a hundred musicians of renowned skill. Never shall I forget the effects of his magical touch, which kept his hearers entranced and rapt in wonder. Many imagined he was an unearthly object. What gave rise to this idea was the black locks which

adorned that sinister face and Jewish nose—more like one of the creations of Eugène Sue, “the wandering Israelite,” than a being of the present day.

It has always been acknowledged among actors that benefits in provincial theatres have ever been the source of discord, envy, and eternal hatred; and although flaming bills and gorgeous spectacles have been announced on those nights, the public have seldom been satisfied when the affair came off.

I consider it would be much better, in regard to respectability, if benefits were done away with altogether, except indeed when any casualty occurs, such as a disabled actor or a fire. In Paris benefits are very rare indeed. No performer is allowed a benefit till he has been twenty-five years a member of the theatre—of course there is no probability of a second night—then indeed it is a benefit. The Sovereign gives 1,000 francs, each member of his family 500. The nobility, gentry, and merchants all subscribe, and an annuity is purchased, so that the actor may retire from public life.

Although he may be scarcely fifty, yet the authorities think it is better that age should give place to youth and vigour, in preference to that barking sort of declamation to which old members of the sock and buskin are so prone to degenerate.

I have witnessed in my time a Romeo in a great London theatre who was bordering on half

a century, and in a provincial theatre have acted with a Juliet the wrong side of forty; and although she played the part splendidly, yet it was a matter of impossibility to impress an audience with the idea that she was the youthful girl of Verona.

So I consider that age, no matter how gifted, should retire from the theatrical ranks in order that physical power should take its position in a profession that depends in a great measure on strength of lungs and activity of limb.

When we see, in a foreign capital like Paris, the names of some of our great men inscribed on a noble structure like the Bibliothèque, near the Panthéon, we cannot but be struck by the kindly spirit that suggested such a thing. The names, engraved in bold capitals, are: Shakespeare, Dryden, Pope, Chaucer, Milton, Goldsmith, Hume, Byron, Sheridan, Franklin, Captain Cooke, Washington, Blackstone, Richardson, Gibbon, Herschel, Robertson, T. Moore, Michael Scott, Walter Scott, Robert Burns, Fulton.

Outside of the gardens of the Luxembourg, near the Observatory, is a statue of Marshal Ney, on the spot where he was shot, or sacrificed, December 1815. On this statue are the names of all the battles the bravest of the brave had been engaged in. He fought eight in Russia, twelve in Spain, five in France, and fifty-one in Germany,

—making in all seventy-six battles. Very few generals could equal this soldier that the nation loved so well; and his retreat out of Russia must ever stand as the first on record; and yet all could not save him from an unmerited end. But it has been avenged. Ney was born in 1769.

Near the Pont Neuf is a statue to General Desaix, raised by Napoleon in 1802. This hero was born in Strasburg in 1768, and fell in 1800 at Marengo.

At the top of the Rue Richelieu is a splendid bronze statue of Molière, with all the dramas which came from his pen inscribed on the base. This statue was on the point of falling a victim to popular fury at the Revolution of 1848, being mistaken for one of the enemies of the people; one of the mob, however, mounting up and placing a Cap of Liberty on the head of the poet, and exclaiming "Tis Molière!" the dramatist's effigy escaped unhurt. Molière's statue is the perfection of bronze casting. It is strange that a greater writer—Shakespeare—should not be equally favoured by a statue worthy of his renown in the city which has been so benefited and elevated by his dramas.

If London has not raised statues to her poets in the open air, she has erected an edifice that may bid defiance to any European capital to surpass—

that is the British Museum. Whether in exterior grandeur or in its internal works of art and antiquities, I question if the equal of the Museum is in existence.

The philosopher, however, from a distant clime who arrives in the metropolis and is familiar with the celebrated men of the nation—now in the tomb—where is he to seek them out, that he may ponder and meditate over the spot that covers their remains?

Have we a cemetery like Père-la-Chaise, where repose all the mighty names known in history? Certainly not. In London statesmen, warriors, writers, artists, and actors are scattered here and there; while in Paris such characters repose together in a burial-ground unequalled.

In my latter visit to this picturesque and interesting spot, I took down the names of some of the celebrated tombs in the cemetery, viz.: Cassimir de Lavigne, dramatic writer; Beaumarchais, author of 'The Marriage of Figaro;' Molière, Racine, Dupuytren, Cuvier, La Fontaine, Laplace, Denon, Colbert, David, Baron Larrey, Benjamin Constant, General Foy, Marshal Ney, Cambacères, General Suchet, Abbé de Prast, Volney, Sir Sidney Smith, General Kellerman, General Junot, General Mortier, General MacDonald, the noble and devoted Madame La Vallette (here is sculp-

tured her husband's escape from prison), Barras, General Massena, General Davoust, General Gourgaud (Napoleon's faithful and attached friend), Talleyrand, Monge, Count Caulaincourt, Sièyes, General Doyle, General Berthier, General Lauriston, Prince Demidoff, Talma, Mademoiselle Mars, Madame Duchenois, tomb of Abélard and Héloïse; and Gretry, Bellini, Herold, Mehul, composers.

Besides these distinguished names, there are numerous Russian and Prussian princes, nobles, and others, lying in lofty and elaborate mausoleums, whose names are not only difficult to write, but more difficult to pronounce.

In wandering through Paris, an Englishman must feel surprised to see such names on sign-boards as are familiar to his ears, such as Monsieur Barlet, M. Tripe, M. Puff, M. Gruel, M. Saucy, M. Fruit, M. Sins, M. Nozay, M. Poozay, M. Hy, M. Ratté, Madame Blasis, and the celebrated comic actress Madame De Jacet.

There are people in Paris, as well as in London, who advertise for single old gentlemen as lodgers, whose superfluous stock of provisions—wine, spirits, and coals—may assist them in the way of house-keeping.

The following advertisement appeared in a Parisian journal:—

"To the English.—An honourable and distinguished French family would be happy to receive any elderly English gentleman who may be anxious to acquire a knowledge of the French language. The greatest attention will be paid to his comforts, and his nightcap will be constantly aired. No. 140 Champs Elysées. Terms moderate, as society is the chief object."

The general opinion, I believe, in London is, that a Frenchman is the only fit and proper person to give instructions in the French language. Yet in Paris the contrary opinion prevails, for all the professors of English are Frenchmen ; and though they may have a tolerably fair knowledge of the English language, yet I consider they can never teach it, in regard to pronunciation, equal to a native of Great Britain.

The great boon which the Emperor has accorded to Englishmen in the doing away with the unnecessary and vexatious passport-system, and the facility with which they can reach the French capital, will bring both nations into close communion, and render mutual benefit and interchange of good feeling.

Those who are against the opening of the Museums in London will see the advantage derived in Paris from having them thrown open to the people on the Sunday ; and instead of devoting a portion of the day to tippling, they (the French)

more wisely employ it in storing their minds with useful knowledge.

As Paris is about to present to the world an International Exhibition, perhaps the following list of the articles in the Napoleon Room at the Louvre may be acceptable to my readers :—The gray frock-coat and hat which the Emperor wore at St. Helena ; his unassuming tea-service and large teaspoon ; a volume of Ossian's poems, much valued by him ; the Code of Laws, with notes in his own handwriting ; an iron bedstead ; the coat worn in 1813, with blue and red facing ; coronation robe and standard ; dress of the King of Rome ; Denon's celebrated bronze head of Napoleon, executed in 1804, before he began the column in the Place Vendôme ; a necktie and vest ; a piece of Napoleon's hair ; scissors ; case of mathematical instruments ; and some gorgeous and elegant saddles, presented to Napoleon in Egypt.

Several of these articles were given by Napoleon's attached valet, Marchand, and by General Bertrand. In fact, in such high estimation do the people of Paris hold the faithful and noble characters who abandoned place and pension in order to follow Napoleon into exile, that they have named some of the new streets after them, such as the Rue Montholon, Rue Gourgaud, Rue Las Casas, and Rue O'Meara.



NAPOLEON'S TOMB AT THE INVALIDES. 259

As many who visit Paris are ignorant of the language, the translation of the description of Napoleon's tomb at the Invalides may be of some service to the reader.

Napoleon's Tomb at the Invalides.—The body rests in the cedar-and-lead coffin which enclosed his remains at St. Helena. These are deposited in a sarcophagus of granite in a crypt under the great dome of the Invalides. Here is the fulfilment of Napoleon's prophesy:

“Je désire que mes cendres reposent sur les bords de la Seine, au milieu de ce peuple française, que j'ai aimé.”

The sarcophagus is of red granite, highly polished; but the stone is of a finer grain than the celebrated granite of Egypt. It was found in Finland by M. de Montferrend, architect to the Emperor of Russia. According to the opinion of the contractor for the tomb—M. Visconti—this sarcophagus will endure as long as the Pyramids of Egypt. The pilasters which surround it are of Carrara marble. At the foot there is a rich mosaic pavement in the style of that discovered in Rome, displaying a laurel crown, with the names of the following celebrated battles: Rivoli, the Pyramids, Marengo, Austerlitz, Jena, Friedland, Wagram, and the Moscow.

Near the tomb is the sepulchre of General

Duroc, Napoleon's dearest friend, killed in 1813 in Silesia.

Opposite to this tomb repose the mortal remains of Count Bertrand, another faithful and attached friend in adversity.

Lord Leigh has given to the world an account of the Reformatory at Tours; and as I have paid a visit to that truly interesting town, I did not neglect to visit the Institution so truthfully described by his Lordship. It may indeed be called a *model* reformatory in regard to comfort, order, propriety, and utility.

There lived in Tours at that time three Irish officers—men who had served in the French armies with honour and distinction; and these were General Fitzsimons, Colonel Ware, and Major Hoey.

Colonel Ware was a member of a respectable family in the county of Kildare, and held a commission under Lord Edward Fitzgerald at the battle of Vinegar Hill.

Being taken prisoner, he was condemned to death at Kilmainham; but just as the hangman was adjusting the rope a reprieve arrived, and the colonel was permitted to retire from the kingdom.

In 1801 he entered the Irish Brigade in the French service as a volunteer, under General Clarke, and was soon presented with a commission, having distinguished himself at Jena and



Friedland. He was subsequently promoted to a colonelcy; but when the Emperor fell, the hopes of the noble-hearted and generous colonel fell also, being put with many other attached friends of Napoleon on the retired list. He lived and died in Tours.

Major Hoey also served under Napoleon; but General Fitzsimons was of the *ancien régime*, and was faithful to the Bourbon cause. During the Empire he lived in exile; but on the restoration of Louis XVIII. he obtained his rank as a general officer.

At the period when I was introduced to this veteran soldier, he was eighty-one years of age, and stone-blind; but the moment I mentioned my grandfather—Captain Joyce, of the Irish Brigade, under Louis XVI.—the aged general clasped me in his arms and exclaimed:

“What! the grandson of Joyce, my dearest friend—my own captain—that once saved me from a watery grave at Belleisle! Come, my dear boy! and while you remain, make my house your home.”

This is no romance, but a fact, and wherever I encountered the elevated and distinguished of my own country, I was ever admitted to their hospitality and friendship in every sense of the word.

I am proud to quote such gallant officers as General Sir Charles Doyle, General Sir John

Milly Doyle, General Thornton, General Crosbie, General Jervois, Colonel Phibbs Ormsby, and Colonel Grattan.

The number of theatres in Paris that have been burnt are few compared to those destroyed by fire in London—I believe not more than three, viz. the Grand Opéra, Rue le Pelletier, the Favart Theatre, and the Gaieté. The manager of the Favart, an Italian who acted under M. Laurent in 1828 as treasurer of the Italian Opera, fell a victim to the flames.

While I was attached to the English theatre, I observed nightly the *pompriers*, or firemen, enter behind the scenes at the end of the performance, and lay down the hose on the stage; after that they put out all the lights, and remained in the theatre till morning. Those firemen are under military discipline, and are dressed accordingly.



CHAPTER X.

The Author returns to England—Western Circuit—Weymouth, natural and artificial Beauties of the Town and Country—The Royal Box at the Theatre—Rise of the Bedford Family—Isle of Portland, ancient History—George III. teaching a Peasant's Wife how to make a Plum-pudding—Duchess of St. Alban's generosity—Recitations and Lectures the ruin of the Drama—Purbeck and Corfe Castle—The Romans and Saxons—A native Genius—The Channel Islands—Guernsey described; natural Characters and Climate—Smugglers' Caves—The Capital, St. Peter's Port—Public Buildings—Theatre and Theatricals—Historical Recollections—Price of Commodities—Kean meets with a generous Patron—Laws of the Island—Fertility and Beauty of the Soil and Climate.

THE time having arrived for my departure, I bid a heartfelt adieu to La Belle France, and landed once more in England.

The Western Circuit at this time was not disjointed, but remained intact as when under the management of the elder Hughes. The towns consisted of Exeter, Devonport, Weymouth, and the islands of Guernsey and Jersey.

It was in Weymouth where his Majesty George III. spent some of his happy days. Here, in the

little theatre, he sat nightly, and enjoyed the genuine comedies of that day with as much glee as when seated in the state-box on a command-night at Covent Garden. It is a common saying "that mankind are ungrateful." Now I do not think so, when any thing has been done for them. I found the people of Weymouth ever referring to the palmy days of the town when George III. walked on the esplanade unattended, and talked freely with the old women and children; and as a token of gratitude, a column has been erected in honour of the sovereign who loved the town so much, and whose name is still in the mouths of his grateful subjects. The Royal Lodge where his Majesty resided, and the Royal Box at the theatre, are even now pointed out to the visitor with pride and satisfaction.

I found Weymouth a truly theatrical town; and as a proof of this, the manager confessed the first season I was attached to the *corps dramatique* that he realised 300*l*. The following distinguished personages were the most liberal patrons of the theatre: Sir George Thomas, Bart., Mrs. Hicks Beach, General Powell, General Sir Colquhoun Grant, Captain Jackson, R.N., Major Cane, Captain Warrington, Colonel Wyndham, Mr. Weston, Mr. Williams, Mr. Elliott, Mr. Buxton, &c.

Weymouth and Melcombe Regis form opposite



WEYMOUTH AND THE WESTERN CIRCUIT. 265

boundaries of its small harbour; and although Weymouth can boast of several handsome hotels, yet there was a time when the shipwrecked mariner could not find *one* in which he might shelter his houseless head.

This period was in the reign of Henry VII., when a shattered barque put in, and had on board no less a personage than the representative of the Majesty of Spain—the Spanish ambassador. A gentleman of the neighbourhood happening to be in the town, and finding the ambassador almost houseless, made an offer of shelter in his mansion. This act of hospitality laid the foundation of his family's fortune; for this gentleman, by the favour of the Spanish ambassador, was introduced to the king, and was Mr. Russell, the head of the Bedford family.

Weymouth was a place of some importance during the civil wars, having fallen alternately into the hands of either party; but it declined till 1763, when Ralph Allen of Priory Park, Bath, brought it into notice. Afterwards the town became a fashionable resort, in consequence of the visits of George III. and his august family.

Nothing can be more striking and picturesque than the situation of this delightful watering-place. The town is built on the western shore of one of the finest bays in the English Channel; and

being separated into two parts by the river Wey, which forms the harbour, is most conveniently situated for trade.

The residences of the leading people are in the Belvedere, the Crescent, Gloucester Row, Royal Terrace, Chesterfield Place, York Buildings, Charlotte Row, Augusta Place, and Clarence, Pulteney, Devonshire, and Brunswick Buildings.

From the windows fronting the bay can be seen a noble range of hills and cliffs, the Isle of Portland, the shipping and the gay yachts, which are continually entering and leaving the harbour.

To the west of the town is Radipole, where may be seen a range of handsome villas. Here once stood the Barracks; but they have been done away with, and Dorchester made the head-quarters. It was a great loss to Weymouth having the military removed, thus losing in the summer months the gratification of the band. All this might have been avoided if the inhabitants had purchased the Barracks when put up for sale, and presented them to Government, with the request of suffering Weymouth to remain as head-quarters. This timely act of policy was missed; and the inhabitants have deplored it ever since.

The Esplanade is acknowledged the finest in the kingdom. It is a terrace in every sense of the word—30 feet broad; rising from the sands, pro-



SCENERY AND ENVIRONS OF WEYMOUTH. 267

tected by a strong wall, extending for nearly a mile, and commanding a most beautiful panorama of the sea, cliffs, and the mountainous range of rocks by which the bay is enclosed.

There is only one terrace that excels that at Weymouth; it is the celebrated terrace at the ancient palace of St. Germain near Paris, where James II. died.

Many families have selected Weymouth as a permanent residence, in consequence of the purity of the air, the beauty of its scenery, and healthfulness of its climate. All these advantages have raised the town from the state it had fallen into—a fishing hamlet—to that of a fashionable and important watering-town.

Half a mile to the south-west are the remains of Weymouth Castle, erected by Henry VIII., and described by Leyland as “right goodly and warlike, having one open barbican.”

Near Weymouth is a volcano of rather small extent, which has puzzled many of the learned in these matters.

Four miles south is the Island of Portland. Although called an island, it is absolutely a peninsula, being connected with the mainland by a narrow isthmus, like that between Gibraltar and Spain, called “The Chesil or Pebble Bank.” This bank is a line of shingles thrown up by the sea. Among this

shingle are many beautiful pebbles worthy of the attention of those who collect rare specimens.

The Chesil Bank extends for eight miles—from Portland to Abbotsbury.

In Portland is a curious cavern where the water rises like a fountain; and on the eastern side of the island are Rufus and Pennsylvania Castles, while on the northern stands Portland Castle.

The old inhabitants of Portland were something like the aborigines of Scotland and Ireland in regard to that splendid treat, a plum-pudding. They never made such a thing; and knew no more about the ingredients of that Christmas dainty than a Calmuck Tartar.

As George III. took Portland in his wanderings about Weymouth, he one day entered a cottage as the wife was attempting to make a plum-pudding. His Majesty, horrified at the manner in which she was mixing the flour, suet, currants, &c., tucked up his cuffs, and went to work in true English style, and in a very short time made a pudding that would not disgrace the wife of any tradesman within the sound of Bow Bells. The recipe of this pudding is still shown in the island.*

All visitors to Weymouth should not neglect

* I once tasted a plum-pudding at a restaurant in France. On that occasion it was served in a tureen, and was eaten with a spoon!

spending a few hours at Portland, as the sea-views are sublime, particularly St. Alban's Head and Lulworth Castle.

At Nottingham, two miles and a half from Weymouth on the Dorchester road, is a mineral spring, the water of which is efficacious in cases of scrofula. A little further on is the pleasant village of Upway.

The late Duchess of St. Alban's—Miss Mellon—paid a visit to Weymouth; and instead of entertaining the wealthy, she went about doing good among the poor and humble. In the morning she would order the carriage, and drive to all the villages about the town; and as she was dressed for the part she was acting, she would enter a cottage where groceries were sold and ask for three pounds of tea and three pounds of sugar. Perhaps the poor dealer would say, "Oh, ma'am, I have not so much." "Very well," replies her Grace, "let me have what you have got." The articles being purchased, they were placed in the carriage; in this manner she would call on each humble dealer and clear the unpretending village-shops of their contents; the carriage getting tolerably full of tea, coffee, sugar, bread, butter, cheese, tapes, thread, needles, pins, &c. It was then despatched to Weymouth, where the contents were distributed among the aged poor. The Duchess always made

it a rule to enter every shop in any country town where she might be staying and purchase some articles. At Brighton she always encouraged rowing among the ladies of the bathing-machines, and gave prizes to the best rowers among the softer sex, or *femmes de la mer*.

Before the Southampton Theatre became degenerate, in the days of the old managers, the Duke and Duchess of St. Alban's patronised it, and her Grace took 40*l.* worth of tickets: this liberality, together with the moneys taken at the doors, 50*l.*, made a 90*l.* house. Such a receipt in these days is a matter of impossibility.

'Macbeth' was performed on the occasion of her Grace's patronage; and so pleased was she with the manner Locke's music was sung, that the next day she requested all the singers and musicians to attend at the Dolphin Hotel, where the Duchess stayed, and sing the whole of the splendid music.

When this treat was concluded, her Grace came forward and complimented the company. She held in her hand a small bag of sovereigns, and to each musician she gave two sovereigns, and three to each of the vocalists.

One of those vocalists, Mrs. Thomas Hill, daughter to Kelly the manager, was in her youthful days a member of Drury Lane Theatre, at the

period when the Duchess herself formed part of the establishment. Nor did her Grace fail to recognise her co-mate in adversity, and placed in her hand a check on the bank for 50*l*. Mrs. T. Hill was the niece of T. Collins, the original Mock Duke in 'The Honeymoon;' and when Cherry's comedy of 'The Soldier's Daughter' was produced, she acted the child as Miss Kelly at Drury Lane, while Mrs. Jordan personated the Widow.

The latitude of Weymouth is one degree farther south than London; and many plants which require protection from the cold in northern districts here flourish through the winter in the open air. The geranium grows luxuriantly, and requires little care, and the large- and small-leaved myrtle are out-of-door plants. Indeed, so salubrious is the climate, that doctors find it impossible to exist in the town; the people adopting Macbeth's advice in regard to physic.

The pudding-stone is found in the Backwater at Weymouth. This beautiful stone and its varied colours is only to be met with in this locality, where it is polished and formed into elegant and superb tables fit for the drawing-rooms of the fashionable portion of society.

Weymouth was once an El Dorado for a manager, but now the theatre has almost disappeared, and the drama become a dead letter.

What is the cause? Is it the railway? Were the days better for the histrionic art when the passenger left Weymouth at ten o'clock at night, and reached London the next evening at seven? If that is the case, the lovers of the drama must venerate the time when travellers were few, and had a chance of enjoying a landscape in the good old days of stage-coaching.

Not only has the drama disappeared from Weymouth, but from nearly the whole of the west of England. Dorchester is without a theatre. This, the county town of Dorset, was a part of Lee's circuit—Lee,* author of the farce of 'Throw Physic to the Dogs.'

It was from this farce that George Colman stole Caleb Quotem, and placed it in the 'Review.' If the light of the drama has sunk in the West, what luminary have they in its stead? Is it lecturing, or reading, or very indifferent singing?

I must own, those readings which are generally advertised afford an excellent opportunity for taking a nap. Is it possible that a public can long be satisfied with a tame monotonous reading from the poets, and give it the preference to a well-acted play?

To arrest the attention of an audience, a man ought to be gifted with both an oratorical and imitative power; and this power I have never met

* Father of Mrs. Leigh Murray.

with in any of the men called *professional* lecturers, much less in the amateur declaimers.

I am surprised that actors do not give historical readings, or selections from our best poets, more frequently; they are the only persons who possess the requisites—in consequence of great practice—for oratory. They possess also that *ease* which is the result of constant declamatory exercise. Indeed it is impossible for any amateur in lecturing to satisfy a critical audience if he attempts humour and the delineation of eccentric characters. Consequently, any company of comedians in a provincial locality must produce more pleasure to the public in general than any clerical or other lecturer who may take upon himself the onus of an evening's amusement.

The doing away with dramatic amusements would be the abolition of the only rational, elevating, and entertaining recreation in existence. After the labours of the day are over, where is the artisan to spend his evenings? In the public-house, or endure the infliction of a dull lecture, or some duller attempts at singing?

Depend upon it, the French system in the provinces is the best, where the people adjourn to the well-organised theatre, which sends them home soberly to their beds, in order that the evening's amusements may bear the morning's reflections.

I do not deny that lecturing on certain subjects

may be made highly beneficial, whether in the arts or sciences. For instance, if an individual has visited Pompeii, imperial Rome, or mounted the Pyramids of Egypt, he may place those interesting spots in a more lucid position than the author who merely describes them.

The rides about Weymouth, Smallmouth Sands, Upway, and beyond the source of the river Wey, are replete with picturesque and ever-changing objects.

In the Isle of Purbeck are the ruins of Corfe Castle, memorable for the assassination of King Edward the Martyr. Milton Abbey is still beautiful, although so many winters have passed over it; and Sherborne Castle, once the seat of the noble and ill-fated Raleigh, still preserves in its garden waving trees once planted by the man who met an undeserved doom. Dorchester, seven miles from Weymouth, can boast of a Roman encampment, called Maiden Castle, and a Roman amphitheatre: the latter certainly cannot be compared to that of Vespasian's at Rome (the Coliseum), for I have witnessed both; still it is an object worthy of notice.

In my rambles through Dorsetshire—and they were all on foot—I have come on many spots displaying the marks of the Roman invader, proving that this interesting little county was an object of great importance to the conquerors of the world.

The disciplined troops of ancient Rome must have met with a hardy and determined foe in the wild and uncultivated aborigines, judging by the fastness at Dorchester, Maiden Castle. Those barbarians little imagined that the invading foe carried in his train of aggression the seeds of civilisation. Their only thought was to preserve their native soil from the polluting tread of the desolating foe.

Robertson, in his 'Charles V.,' speaks of the Romans in the following language :

"When the spirit of conquest led the armies of Rome beyond the Alps, they found all the countries which they invaded inhabited by people whom they denominated *barbarians*, but who were, nevertheless, brave and independent. These defended their ancient possessions with obstinate valour.

"It was by the superiority of their discipline, rather than that of their courage, that the Romans gained any advantage over them. A single battle did not, as among the effeminate inhabitants of Asia, decide the fate of a state.

"The vanquished people resumed their arms with fresh spirit; and their undisciplined valour, animated by the love of liberty, supplied the want of conduct as well as of union.

"During those long and fierce struggles for dominion or independence, the countries of Europe were successively laid waste; a great part of their

inhabitants perished in the field; many were carried into slavery; and a feeble remnant, incapable of further resistance, submitted to the Roman power.

“The Romans having thus desolated Europe, set themselves to civilise it.

“The form of government which they established in the conquered provinces, though severe, was regular, and preserved public tranquillity.

“As a consolation for the loss of liberty, they communicated their arts, sciences, their language, and their manners to their new subjects.

“Europe began to breathe, and to recover strength after the calamities which it had undergone; agriculture was encouraged, population increased, the ruined cities were rebuilt, new towns were founded, an appearance of prosperity succeeded, and repaired in some degree the havoc of war.”

In another place Robertson speaks of the oppressed and conquered people :

“The martial and independent spirit, which had distinguished their ancestors, became in a great measure extinct among all the people subject to the Roman yoke. They lost not only the habit but even the capacity of deciding for themselves or of acting from the impulse of their own minds; and the dominion of the Romans, like that

of all great empires, degraded and debased the human species."

As a proof of this, those lofty earthworks, with their double ditch, at Dorchester, were constructed by the oppressed and conquered people, who laboured more like horses in their erection than like human beings.

I have, for the sake of juvenile readers, given this brief notice of a country teeming with vestiges of its former splendour; and hope I may not be censured by those learned in the ancient state of the West of England for thus deviating from the object of my work.

In the small town of Wareham, Dorset, I encountered the author of a Saxon tragedy, which had a considerable run at the Coburg Theatre in its palmy days. This was Penney, known as the Dorsetshire poet.

Penney bears out Goldsmith's assertion in a financial sense, for he lived and died unencumbered by that which keeps the miser awake—money.

At the period which brought me in collision with this highly-gifted man, he was teaching the young idea how to shoot, keeping a day-school; while his cottage was situated in a most romantic spot, a mile from Wareham. Here in this sequestered retreat, the poet and dramatic writer by his

fire-side read some of his manuscript works to me with good emphasis and good discretion. There was one in particular,—a Saxon masonic tragedy in three acts; the period, the conquest of England by William.

At that time the Grand Master of the Order was a Saxon prince and Archbishop of Canterbury.

The stirring portion of the tragedy lay between the Conqueror and the Archbishop respecting the Masonic body.

The Norman despot was opposed to the “enlightened few,” while the princely churchman defended its institutions and elevating principles.

The language of this drama was of a superior order; and although a considerable time has rolled on since it struck my ears, I have a vivid recollection of its beauty and boldness.

This tragedy perished, I fear, with many of his literary works when this unfortunate man sunk into the arms of death. Three of Penney’s tragedies on Saxon history were published in London in one volume, and entitled ‘Britain’s Tragedies.’

Whether they proved a lucrative speculation to the publisher I cannot say; but Penney declared he never received a sixpence for all his toil and trouble.

Yet the work was reviewed, and acknowledged to display more research in Saxon habits, manners, and localities than any extant.

Canon Bowles of Salisbury, of literary renown, commended the work; and many others sent flattering compliments to the poor poet. Those were all he received; and if flattering encomiums can make a poor man happy, Penney ought to have been the happiest in existence.

Penney had the misfortune to be of humble parentage; but had he been the son of even a curate, some patronage would have flowed to him. As it was, he lived and died in obscurity; and his name is now only known to a few who felt the force of his neglected genius, and mourn his untimely doom.

Penney published a Saxon poem of some length, 'Rogvald.' The following lines, on the future of England at the Saxon period, are a pretty fair specimen of his style as a poet :

"Ere long thy crowned race
Shall mingle with the regal Cerdic blood,
From whom a seed of mighty kings
Will rise, that o'er the British isles
Shall reign sole monarchs,
Happy land of peace and bliss !
Her war-ships, wheresoe'er the sun
First gilds the orient deep,
Or casts with sinking orb his latest ray

Across the western sea's tempestuous surge
To realms remote,
And numerous nations yet unknown
Shall her supremacy in thunder speak,
And awe the subject world,
Her dauntless sons,
In Indian climes, far to the East and West,
Shall conquer empires,
And the standard Cross
Plant on the towers of foul idolatry.
As from the sun in noontide splendour darts
The glorious beams
Of his unfading light.
Invigorating all things,
So shall spread
From Britain's billow-circled shores
The brightness of the Gospel
Far and near,
Till the wide globe to Jesus bow the knee,
And every nation own Him for their Lord.
The British isles united will become
One wide renowned empire.*
Then shall shine,
O Albion! on thy land prosperity,
And the vast ocean thy dominions own ;
Then shall thy numerous sons of various tribes,
Like brethren of one family, unite !
Each one in peace
Sitting beneath his vine,
No foreign foe his daring to provoke."

Many have found favour and received pensions that could not boast of a tithe of Penney's

* At this time England stood alone, without Ireland, Scotland, or Wales.

talent, if we may judge from the doggrel rhymes that have come before the public.

This Dorsetshire son of the Muses did not devote the whole of his leisure to the stringing together of verses, but he left behind him his ideas on the regions of eternal bliss; and that elaborate work he has read in a most masterly style in my presence.

But fate was against him. Not but that he had some stanch and sterling friends. According to his own words in 'Rogvald,' when urged by domestic and worldly troubles to the very brink of destruction, he says, "Allport, that reverend minister of religion, stept in like a guardian angel and saved him." Here are his own words:

"O gentle Allport, friend of mercy,
Who to me hast been
The good Samaritan!
For thou didst bind
With pitying hand up those fast-bleeding wounds
Misfortune had inflicted,
And the balm
Of kindness poured into my broken heart.
Should I be silent, sure the very stones
Would to the heavens blab my ingratitude.
Wild, on a dreadful precipice, I stood,
Amid the beating of a ruthless storm,
Unfriended and unpitied;
By me frowned
The serpent-crowned phantom of despair,

And pointing to oblivion's dreamless bed,
 At the dark bottom of the gulf below,
 Bade me leap down and be at rest for ever.
 I dared not look behind—

A wretched wife

And shrieking innocent knelt imploringly,
 And strove to hold me from the fatal brink.
 Thou, like the angel of compassion, camest
 In that dread frenzied hour to succour *him*
 Whom *none* regarded.*
 Yes; thou minister
 Of charity and true religion joined,—
 Thou from the yawning verge
 Of darkness ledd'st me
 To hope's sweet sunshine and the gates of joy."

The Western Circuit, as I have already stated, consisted of Exeter, Devonport, the Channel Islands, and Weymouth.

The conclusion of the season at the latter delicious watering-place was the signal for the *corps dramatique* to strike their tents and sail for Guernsey.

The Channel Islands are as much unknown to the community in general as if they were situated in the Black Sea.

I have been asked "if there were any respectable houses to be seen—any thing like a town?"

* Here is proof that Penney was abandoned by the world, without one friend—save the reverend divine alluded to—and was within an ace of sharing the fate of Otway and Chatterton.



SITUATION AND BEAUTIES OF GUERNSEY. 283

another conceived "there were only fishermen's huts and smugglers' caves in the islands." But how were they struck when I told them there were elegant mansions, delightful villas, pleasure-grounds, handsome roads, promenades, horticultural gardens, orchards, colleges, a theatre, and a gaol!

The fruitful and pleasant isle of Guernsey lies thirteen miles from Jersey, seven west of Sark, fifteen south-west of Alderney, seventy-one from Plymouth, and one hundred and four from Southampton.

The chains of rocks lying east and west between these islands and the coast of Normandy appear to be the remnants of an ancient connection with the mainland. Indeed, there cannot be a doubt not only of these islands having been joined with France, but also that the British Islands and their dependencies once formed part and parcel of the Continent of Europe.

Guernsey is of a triangular form, nine miles long and six broad. Its circumference, following the sinuosities of its coast, is calculated at thirty-nine miles.

The southern shore of the island, and a part of the eastern, is a bold and continuous cliff, rising from the sea perpendicularly to a height of two hundred and seventy feet.

The land slopes gradually to the north, till it subsides in a low flat, not much above the level of the sea; and this is regarded as the most fertile part of the island.

Rivers there are none, but about half a dozen brooks which descend to the sea.

The island is wholly of granite formation, and the soil which lies between its clustered rocks is an accumulation of decomposed syenite.

Nearly in the centre of the east side of the island is a long curve or irregular bay, in which lies the town of St. Peter's Port.

As St. Helier's, the capital of Jersey, has its rock in the harbour with Elizabeth Castle, so St. Peter's Port, capital of Guernsey, has its rock, with Castle Cornet ornamenting it. In other days the governors resided in those circumscribed places, cabined and bound in; but now in these latter days those authorities are located in more rural and picturesque spots, where luxuriant grounds are laid out for their recreation.

Castle Cornet, in Cromwell's time, stood a siege; and at present an enemy might meet with a repulse, if an attack was made.

The town of St. Peter's Port from the bay has a truly picturesque appearance, in consequence of the buildings rising from the water, one over the other, and surmounted by Elizabeth College and



ST. PETER'S PORT. VICTOR HUGO. 285

Castle Carey. The town is built on a slope of an eminence, and is about three miles in circumference. The streets are narrow; but in Haute-ville, or High Town, they are more airy and pleasant: it is in this quarter that the author of the 'Hunchback of Notre Dame' and 'Ruy Blas'—Victor Hugo—resides; that man who, instead of entertaining the wealthy at Christmas, affords a dinner to three hundred poor children, and with Madame attends on them himself. Here it must be admitted example is better than precept.

Those visitors to the island who may be short-winded can find splendid exercise in ascending the flight of steps, one hundred and forty-five in number, from the Market-place to the New Town; the view when they reach the top will repay all the toil and trouble. A quarter of a mile from the New Town is the Promenade, called the New Ground; and although it is nearly a century since it was purchased and laid out for public recreations, still it is called "*New Ground*," and will no doubt in a century to come be denominated as now "*La Nouvelle Terre*."

The handsomest fish-market in Europe is in this island. It is one hundred and ninety-eight feet in length, twenty-two in width, and twenty-three in height; the whole being entirely covered over, and extremely well lighted by seven octagonal

skylights, beneath which there are Venetian blinds for the purposes of ventilation. The double row of slabs, that extend the whole length of the building, are chiefly of variegated marble, and are supplied with abundance of fresh water. The whole was erected at a cost of 50,000*l*.

The market for butcher's meat stands next; and the vegetables are sold in the public way. In 1821 the vegetable market was held in Southampton High Street, and also in Brussels.

The supply of fruit and all sorts of vegetables is of the very best quality, and very reasonable; indeed, the people lay down a price, and never deviate from it.

The butter is sold by the long weight—eighteen ounces in the pound—and in summer it is only a shilling. The Guernsey and Jersey butter excels the Devon and Dorset.

Poultry is very reasonable. Turkeys 4*s*. each. The geese (chiefly French) run from 2*s*. 6*d*. to 3*s*., and are of tolerable size. Fowls 2*s*. 6*d*. the couple. Common tea 1*s*. 6*d*. per pound, best 2*s*. 6*d*.; coffee 8*d*. per pound.

Champagne, port, and sherry are sold duty-free; while the lighter wines, liqueurs, rum-shrub, and hollands, are within the reach of the humblest pensioner.

In regard to mansions, villas, and cottages:

to those in easy circumstances rent is no object; but to the humble and unpretending sojourner in the island the matter of rent is very important. For those who may desire a rural retreat in Sarnia, a cottage with a good garden attached can be procured for 8*l.* or 10*l.* a-year, Guernsey currency.

The people of the island are very quiet till Saturday night arrives, and then a little indulgence in *eau de vie* has its effect, and inspires them with the power of vocalisation as they wend their way to their rural retreats. It is an odd fact that some people, without taste, voice, or ear, will burst forth into song after sacrificing to the jolly god, whom when in a state of sobriety no entreaty could induce to attempt such an annoyance.

Between Moulin Street and Fermain Bay stands Doyle's Monument. It is one hundred feet in height, but two hundred and sixty from the level of the sea. There is a winding staircase inside to the top, which affords a splendid view of the islands. This column was erected by the people as a token of their gratitude and respect for the Lieutenant-governor, Sir John Doyle, in consequence of the sterling services he had performed in the island.

Previous to the arrival of this gallant Irish officer, the roads in Guernsey were in a wretched

state, and Sir John in a most praiseworthy manner set the military to work and made the highways of the island into an absolute pleasure to traverse, instead of, as heretofore, a toil and a plague.

Being, like his countrymen in general, social and agreeable, he established a Masonic Lodge, which is still extant, and bears his name. Here, among the sons of light, his Excellency threw aside his sword and baton, and for the time being presided in the midst of equality.

I do not consider mankind in general unmindful or ungrateful, when any thing has been done for them; and though many a gallant gentleman lies without a stone to mark the spot that covers his remains, and many a brave officer when this age passes away may be forgotten, that can never be the case with Gen. Sir John Doyle; for while the Isle of Sarnia is encircled by the ocean, the remembrance of the governor who endeared himself to the people of Guernsey will never die. He has gained that which few generals of division achieve—immortality in the Channel Islands.

In 1813, the period of Sir John's sway in the island, having, like his nephews—General Sir Charles and Sir John Milly Doyle—a strong theatrical taste, there was at that time one actor in the theatre who particularly took his notice; this actor, however, did not please the taste of the million,

and when the test came of public approval—the benefit-time—this actor's appeal was disregarded; and he had to endure on his night what few of the histrionic art admire,—a beggarly account of empty benches.

Sir John took this poor undone actor by the hand and patronised an entertainment at the Assembly Rooms. The entertainment was given by himself, and consisted of songs, recitations, tales, and imitations. A densely-thronged room was the consequence. This circumstance occurred in the spring; and on the 24th of the following January 1814, the same actor's performance of Shylock at Drury Lane was pronounced the greatest dramatic effort of the day; and this was Edmund Kean.

So much for provincial celebrity and provincial discrimination.

I do not deny but the island of Guernsey at the period that I formed a member of its *corps dramatique* evinced taste and judgment; but in the days of Edmund Kean genius certainly passed unheeded save by the liberal-minded governor.

The leading class of the island for years attended and upheld the theatre, till one of those straight-haired, stiff-necked, selfish, and supercilious characters preached against it, and persuaded his dupes that he could amuse them better by a dull drowsy discourse—a discourse

that would be better placed if his auditors were like Henry IV. or Richard III.—unable to entice the drowsy god to their pillow. But he is gone like a baseless fabric, and left not a rack behind.

The College in Guernsey was founded by Elizabeth, and is called after her. The Queen assigned eighty gunters of wheat-rent for its support.

This institution was sunk almost to nothing, till in 1824 it was put on the footing of a college. The *curriculum* includes Hebrew, Greek, Latin, French, English, divinity, geography, history, mathematics, arithmetic, and English literature: terms, twelve pounds a-year. Spanish, Italian, German, drawing, music, fencing, and drilling, additional charge.

The poor are well taken care of in the island; they are well-clothed, well-lodged, well-fed, and walk about at their ease and comfort.

The authorities certainly take good care that the number of indigent persons should be of their own locality, for the moment that people arrive, and good grounds are ascertained that they may become chargeable to the island, they are directly shipped for England.

The law of banishment is still in existence, and as the island has no penal settlement, the authorities send certain culprits to England as a *punishment*. The trials take place in the Royal Court, before the Bailiff, in both French and English.



The gentlemen of the jury, as in France, are dispensed with.

When lotteries were abolished in England, in consequence of the injury they inflicted on the working-class—being a system of gambling, and consequently unjust—they were still continued in Guernsey, as the English law could not control that of the island; but when Lord John Russell wrote to the Bailiff and laid the matter before him, and requested as a point of justice to put them down, the request was complied with, and in 1836 the last lottery that occurred was drawn in the island. The committee of management of the lotteries had a farewell dinner at Marshall's Hotel; and on that occasion I was present, and sat by the side of the noble chairman, Mr. Ozanne.

The reading portion of the community have not been neglected in the island; for there is a public library, where all the works of talent may be had; the charge extremely moderate.

A Tradesman's Library and Mechanic's Institute in the Pollet have also been established.

The want of such a place for the humble artisan had been long felt in the island, particularly as there were many temptations held out by the retailers of spirits and other beverages, the effects of which are most injurious to business, if the morning demands its attention.

It may appear strange, but there is not a Jew settled in the island. One did certainly make an attempt to gain a footing—a Mr. Fink—but after two or three years' trial he had to strike his tent, as did the Israelites of old, and decamp. Since that the Christians have it all their own way.

The harbour is formed artificially by a long pier, and the improvements effected on each side of the lighthouse are of such a nature as to astonish all those who have not touched at the island for a number of years. Glatney, which formerly was a rough road by the side of the bay, is now a beautiful sheltered promenade.

This is certainly the right way of getting the island popular; but still Jersey bears away the bell, and attracts more visitors. Whether the officials on board of the steamers are the cause, I cannot say; but without doubt Guernsey is equally as worthy of a visit as its rival of greater dimensions—Jersey.



CHAPTER XI.

The Islands continued—Different Classes of the Inhabitants ; divided according to their incomes—An effective Police force of *three* Officers and *one* Man—Jersey, St. Heliers ; Natural Beauties and Geological Characters of the Island—The Theatre, Castle, and Public Buildings—Historical recollections—View of Jersey from the Prince's Tower—Theatricals and Amateurs—Meeting Chippendale and old friends—M. Alexandre the conjuror—Mr. O'Neill, nephew of Lady Beecher—Vicissitudes of a Lecturer's career—Hugo Vamp, *alias* O'Neill—Gerald Griffin, author of 'The Collegians'—Colman, the licenser of plays—Banim and the O'Hara tales—Remarks on Sheridan Knowles—Opinion on the London Theatres in 1829—Mrs. Siddons's prophecy of the future greatness of Macready, while a youth in his father's company.

THE visitor to Guernsey, as he passes through the Grange Road into the Rohais, and proceeds to Cobo Bay, must be struck with the elegant mansions, picturesque villas, and neat cottages that line the entire way.

In front of the several houses are trailed up splendid geraniums and the justly-celebrated Guernsey lily, the pride of the island.

This flower is a native of Japan. A vessel was wrecked off the coast, and having some roots on board which were washed ashore, germinated, and were afterwards universally cultivated.

Of the salubrity of the Guernsey climate there can be no doubt, if we only consider the longevity of its inhabitants.

The heat of summer is tempered by a gentle sea-breeze; and like all maritime situations, the cold of winter is mitigated by the caloric imparted to the atmosphere from the surrounding ocean. Frosts are neither severe nor durable; sometimes winters pass away without even a fall of snow. This I have known in both Portsmouth and Weymouth.

The luxuriance of the various exotics, which in this island in winter are unprotected, affords unequivocal evidence of the mildness of the climate. Dark and foggy November, when all things fade, and the last rose of summer is gone, it may be found here in Guernsey not only flourishing, but even camellias may be seen to blossom and orange-trees to thrive.

The northern extremity of the island is bare and ugly, but the most attractive scenery is to be found on the southern and south-western sides.

The mansion and grounds of Lord de Saumarez, the descendant of one of England's naval heroes,

are worthy of notice. The other spots of interest are Fermain Bay, Petit Bo, Moulin Huet, and the fort or grand military station of the island.

Some Druidical remains were discovered in 1812, consisting of antique vessels, bones, and an obelisk of Celtic origin.

Some books say there are but two classes in Guernsey; but having lived in the island two years, and paid it visits on several occasions, I consider I am not beyond the mark when I say there are *six* classes. The leading people are called the "Sixtys." Those of moderate independence are denominated the "Fortys." Retired tradesmen who may have 150*l.* a-year are known as the "Thirtys." Those individuals who are blessed with 100*l.* a-year are the "Twentys." The pensioners,—such as half-pay lieutenants, faithful and kindly-remembered butlers, valets, cooks, tutors, and ladies'-maids, averaging from 40*l.* to 60*l.* a-year,—may be put down as the "Fifteens." And those veterans who have navigated the world, and fought in every corner of it, but now in the downhill of life, exist upon 20*l.* or 30*l.* a-year, we must place as the "Tens." These various classes do not mix, but are divided and subdivided, as among *shopkeepers*,—the wealthy keeping aloof from the needy. The natives are a separate body, marry and intermarry among one another, and in their

habits, manners, and religion, bear a stronger resemblance to the Welsh than to the Normans, their progenitors.

Formerly there were several amateur musicians, such as Colonel Kenedy, M. De Patural, assisted by professional talent, particularly Mr. Ray, organist of the old church, and Mr. William Davis.

Mr. Davis was once known and respected in Southampton as the leader of the orchestra in the theatre, but he afterwards took up his residence in the island, where he died in 1837.

The *police force* of Guernsey is comprised of four,—an inspector, serjeant, corporal, and a private. Notwithstanding the weakness of this force, *robberies* are rare, and those which are committed are by strangers to the island. And as to *murders*, scarcely one occurs in twenty years.

The last was a most diabolical murder, perpetrated on the body of a lone and aged woman in the Canishers, one of the narrow streets of the town at the outlets. This monster in human shape beat the poor old creature's brains out, for the sake of a small sum of money which he knew she had received. He was tried and condemned to death. Being remarkably penitent, and capable of quoting Scripture, he raised up a party in his favour, and a petition with seven hundred signatures was despatched to the Home Secretary for

pardon; but it met with a refusal, and he suffered the just penalty of his abominable crime.

Cooke, of Leicester, who murdered Mr. Paice in 1831, and consumed his body afterwards by fire, made equally an impression by his penitential tears on the old ladies of the locality; and every thing was done to save him, but without effect.

There is constant communication between Guernsey, Weymouth, Plymouth, Southampton, and London, and steamers run frequently to Granville and St. Malo.

The passage from Southampton to Guernsey, in good weather, takes eight hours, and to Jersey ten hours. Those who feel a desire to visit the islands will find Southampton the best route in every sense of the word.

Jersey, the Majorca of the Channel Islands, is ten miles long and five broad, and its circumference is about fifty. Sloping from north to south, in contradistinction to Guernsey, the whole of the northern coast, with the eastern and western projections, will be found composed of rugged and precipitous rocks; while the southern shore, though fringed with crags and undulating cliffs, lies low, and has a considerable portion of that fine sandy beach so inviting to those who come chiefly to bathe and promenade by the sea-shore. Havre de Pas, for instance, is a most luxurious spot in

the summer months, an attraction that Guernsey is deficient in.

St. Heliers, like St. Peter's Port, is the capital of the island. It lies on the eastern side of St. Aubins' Bay. St. Aubins is a pleasant drive of about four miles by the sea-side, studded with handsome villas and cottages. The visitor, when he first arrives at the island, cannot help being struck with the noble bay, sloping shores, and thickly-wooded heights, profusely sprinkled with splendid mansions, villas, and cottages, displaying at one view the attributes of the beautiful and picturesque. St. Heliers is Swiss-like in its aspect, and, backed by its lofty stronghold Fort Regent, overlooking the town, at once impresses the stranger with the conviction that the elements of novelty are every where around him.

Those who have visited Jersey thirty-five or forty years ago, and wander through the St. Heliers of the present day (1865) cannot avoid noticing the improvements in the town, and the comforts and reforms that have been effected in that period,—not to say any thing of the harbour, piers, and walks in every direction; but, in a dramatic sense, look at the little theatre in Regent Road, if in existence; then walk to the Crescent, and behold the structure elevated with architectural beauty, and a front resembling that of Covent Garden Theatre,



but certainly not of the magnitude of that noble building. Still, in a dramatic point, a rapid stride in advancement has been made in the island.

The same may be said of Boulogne-sur-Mer. The theatre in that fashionable watering-place forty years ago was contemptible, and a new one was erected in a more conspicuous position. This theatre five years back fell a prey to the flames, and another has been built that may vie with any theatre out of London or Paris for beauty. The most elaborate structure in Jersey is Fort Regent, which was begun in 1806, and cost 800,000*l*. The powder-magazine holds 5000 barrels. The barracks are supplied with water from a well 235 feet deep and 10 in diameter, bored through the solid rock.

Elizabeth Castle stands out from St. Heliers in bold relief on a large sea-girt rock. There is a legend respecting the adjacent rock, on which lived a pious and charitable character named St. Helier, for all such men were denominated saints who devoted their services to the poor and wretched portion of the community. This holy man fell a victim to the Danish pirates of that day. The town took its name from this Christian, who has thus gained an everlasting celebrity.

Cornwall in ancient times abounded with such men, if we may judge from the towers of St. Just, St. Blazey, St. Austle, and St. Ives.

There are many seminaries of learning in Jersey, besides its well-arranged College. Dr. Carter conducts a school in St. Heliers with first-rate tact and ability. Neil's academy has been long established in the island, and also those of Mr. Denziloe's and Mrs. Parkes'.

The principal libraries are situated in the Royal Square. Here may still be seen vestiges of the French attack on the island, when the brave Major Peirson fell in its defence. The Row which leads to Halkett Place takes its name from this gallant soldier, while Halkett Place is derived from another gallant officer—General Sir Colin Halkett, Lieutenant-governor of Jersey in 1830, a warm and devoted friend of the drama in every sense of the word.

Very few governors at their *soirées* ever thought of inviting any of the histrionic art to grace and adorn their revels. This liberal and kindly feeling, however, Sir Colin displayed when the writer was a member of the theatre in the island (1830).

La Hogue Vie, or Prince's Tower, is three miles from St. Heliers. From the summit of the tower a splendid view can be had of the whole island.

Inglis, the truthful tourist—the man who walked 1500 miles on foot in Ireland; who left the country with different ideas from those with which he had entered it, and has bequeathed the



INGLIS'S DESCRIPTION OF THE ISLAND. 301

fruits of that journey—has also left behind a splendid description of the Channel Islands.

Here is Inglis's graphic description from the top of Prince's Tower :

"From the top of this tower Jersey appears like an extensive pleasure-ground,—one immense park, thickly studded with trees, beautifully undulating, and dotted with cottages.

"Fertility is on every side seen meeting the sea. The fine curves of several of the bays may be distinctly traced, with their martello towers and other more imposing defences. Several of the larger valleys may be distinguished by the shadow which is thrown on one side ; while all around the horizon is bounded by the blue sea, excepting towards the east, where the French coast, stretches in a wide curve towards the north and south, and which, in one direction, approaches so near to Jersey, that the white sea-beach is distinctly seen, and, in clear weather, even the towns that are near to the coast. This view instantly makes you anxious to range over the island, to penetrate into the valleys and ravines, to wander through the orchards, fields, pastures, and gardens, and to descend to the bays and creeks, which are naturally and justly pictures full of beauty and repose.

"The new roads that intersect the island in many directions are excellent and commodious ;

but the old roads, though dreadfully perplexing and intricate, should be assuredly explored by those who desire to arrive at a fair estimate of the scenic attractions of the island. One object in the construction of the old roads was to puzzle pirates or bewilder an enemy, and thus effectually retard and obstruct their attempts to subdue the islanders.

“During the heat of summer it is delightfully refreshing to turn aside into one of these bye-paths that scarcely admit even a straggling ray of the noontide sun; but later—in autumn—the decomposition of decaying vegetable matter going on in their shady depths renders it advisable to take the new road.

“Govey, the seat of the oyster-fishery, and Mont Orgueil Castle, with its magnificent prospects, are worthy of the visitor’s notice.

“Mont Orgueil stands on the summit of a rocky headland jutting out into the sea; and though its origin is unknown, it is recognised as being a fortress of importance in the time of King John. Charles II., in his exile, stopped a short time in the castle. From its summit the splendid Cathedral of Coutance, in Normandy, can be seen.

“St. Aubins may be called the second town in Jersey, although in England it would be reckoned

a village, having only one straggling street. There is a small pier, and there are several handsome mansions and villas on the heights overlooking the town, and a *Grammar School*.”*

Inglis says: “St. Brelade Bay is the most attractive; but Bouley Bay,” says the talented writer, “is grander, St. Aubins nobler, Roselle and Grève de Lecq more secluded. But in none of them do we find as much as in St. Brelade; for there we view the union of the barren, the wild, and the picturesque, and in none of them do the works of man harmonise so well with the natural scenery that surrounds them.”

The marine caves adjoining Pleinmont Point and Cape Grosnez are well worthy of a visit, and are celebrated among all lovers of nature in all its sublimity.

That the inhabitants of Jersey are not devoid of dramatic taste a circumstance which happened some time ago will prove. This was the erection of a new theatre on the site of the old one, which fell a prey to the flames. How different from Cheltenham in 1840! When that theatre was burnt, the fashionable and elegant town was deterred by an *arch enemy* from constructing another building for the *only* in-

* Strange, in these days, to call a Seminary a Grammar-school. It must be a very strange school where grammar is not taught.

tellectual and elevating recreation in existence—the Drama.

Jersey formerly was noted for its *amateur* actors, particularly Captain Stewart, Captain de Carteret, Mr. Thompson, Mr. Martin, Mr. Thurston, Mr. Turner, Mr. Hawes, Mr. M'Mahon, Mr. Woollett, Captain Power, &c.

Mr. Thompson, son-in-law to Colonel Hely, abandoned the church and embraced the stage. After a trial of some time, and not admiring the rule of tyrannical managers, he considered he could not do better than become one himself; accordingly he assumed the reins of government of the Rochester Theatre, under the name of Thornton.

This establishment he conducted for several seasons with considerable success.

He had two points in his favour as a manager; the first, being a gentleman, and the second, possessing the means of effectually carrying out so desirable a rule. Unfortunately for the profession, this estimable man was cut off in the prime of life, and died universally lamented.

Mr. Thompson's first attempt on the stage was for the benefit of the writer of this, in Jersey. He played Fontaine, the advocate, in the French melodrama,—claimed by some English writer,—‘Therese, or the Orphan of Geneva;’ and in the after-piece he personated Tommy Tinkle the

muffinman, in Buckstone's drama of the 'Dream at Sea.'

Mr. Thompson's paternal income was 10,000*l.* a-year, and at the death of his mother 3,000*l.* a-year more would have been added to his fortune.

Mr. Martin, another popular Jersey amateur, gained great renown by his performance of Billy Black, the boots at the inn, in Peake's admirable and well-written farce 'The Hundred-pound Note.' The song of the 'Bundle of Conundrums,' which Mr. Martin sang with such life and humour, was in every boy's mouth in the island.

This gentleman was so pleased with his success as an actor, that he was on the point of abandoning all his prospects in the church for the stage; but a handsome living falling within his grasp, he entered the pulpit, and thus changed his *rôle* for certain and permanent bread.

Mr. MacMahon, noted in Jersey for both vocal and histrionic talent, left his father's establishment—a respectable seminary for learning—and became a gentleman-actor; but after some trial in the profession he abandoned the vicissitudes attendant on it, and quietly settled down with his aged mother in the wilds and umbrageous woods of Normandy, within sight of Mont St. Michel, near the ancient town of Avranches. This gentleman was brother to the late Mrs. Donald King,

and is related to the celebrated Marshal MacMahon.

Those tourists who may penetrate Normandy and approach the birthplace of the Conqueror, Caen, will find many objects of interest, and in Avranches still remains a tablet, near an ancient church, on which is written: "Here Henry II., duke of Normandy, did penance for the murder of Thomas à Becket." This does away with the idea that Henry crawled up on his knees to the top of Mont St. Michel as a punishment for this deed.

The original theatre in Jersey, in the Regent Road, after the erection of the new one in the Crescent, was used occasionally for amateur and other performances.

In 1837 Otway's tragedy of 'Venice Preserved' was performed at the Regent Road Theatre. Pierre was represented by Mr. Herbert, *alias* Dowling, aged 75, a veteran actor, and the original Osmond in Dublin in Monk Lewis's drama of the 'Castle Spectre;' at this period (1798) he was the greatest actor of his age. George Cooke was then a secondary tragedian in the Dublin Theatre; and in the same piece played Reginald, a third-rate part. Although Herbert was a hero in his own town, he ceased to be popular in England, and was obliged to adopt his original profession,—an artist in oil.

During the performance of 'Venice Preserved,' he elicited thunders of applause by the vigour he threw into Pierre. This was his last appearance on the stage—for the next day he was in his coffin. The Belvedera was his own daughter, Miss Herbert.

While residing in Jersey I met with a comedian of the old school, Chippendale. Here to this sweet isle he retired, after a long and weary pilgrimage, to end his days in quiet and repose. And here he obtained that blessing which was denied the immortal Goldsmith, if we may judge from the poet's own words, when he says :

"O blest *retirement*, friend to life's decline,
 Retreat from cares that never must be mine !
 How blest is he who crowns in shades like these
 A youth of labour with an age of ease ;
 Who quits a world where strong temptations try,
 And since 'tis hard to combat learns to fly !
 For him no wretches born to work and weep
 Explore the mine or tempt the dangerous deep ;
 No surly porter stands in guilty state
 To spurn imploring famine from the gate.
 But on he moves to meet his latter end,
 Angels around befriending virtue's friend ;
 Sinks to the grave with unperceived decay,
 While resignation gently slopes the way ;
 And while his prospects brightening to the last,
 His heaven commences ere the world be past."

Indeed, of all the places I have ever visited, I

consider Jersey the best for the *recluse*—for the man who has suffered disappointments, troubles, evils, and “all the ills that flesh is heir to.” Here in this isle, shut out from all the world, the *solitary* can find a nook where, unmolested and unnoticed, he may lay him down in safety and slumber away the days allotted to his earthly tabernacle.

The man of acres, who, in the turn of fortune’s wheel, may have lost them all, here, in this circumscribed spot, may fancy one immense park, with lodges dotted here and there; and in this park he may wander free and unconfined, and say with Alexander Selkirk, “I am monarch of all I survey.”

M. Alexandre, the renowned ventriloquist, paid the island a visit *pour plaisir*.

This celebrated French performer I came in collision with in Southampton in 1822, and witnessed his entertainment at the theatre on several occasions: of all the rivals to Charles Mathews, in a solo entertainment, I consider Alexandre the first. He was perfectly original in all he attempted; his celerity in the change of character, the rapidity of altering costume, his brilliancy of ventriloquism, and rapid alteration of voice and face, were so wonderful that many imagined it was not one individual, but several, who were before the public.

Alexandre’s face was handsome, and produced great effect when he assumed the character of

Sister Celestine; then directly after he appeared as the gouty, old fat alderman.

After his brilliant career in England he retired to his native city Paris, where he gave evenings in the season among the noblesse.

The reason why M. Alexandre confined his exertions to a select class was the dread of his lungs being affected if he continued long before the public. And well he might fear such result to his trying performance; for Charles Mathews died of a pulmonary complaint, and a ventriloquist some thirteen years ago fell a martyr to his professional exertions; while Sharp, an extraordinary character as a ventriloquist, in 1834, who imitated the musical-box and the baby in the cradle with the hooping-cough, which always set a theatre of the calibre of Drury Lane in a roar, was cut off by disease and disordered lungs in the prime of life.

When the Channel Islands theatres were combined with Weymouth and Exeter, and known as the Western Circuit, it might truly be called a pleasant and agreeable year's theatrical campaign; but when disunited, like other circuits in the kingdom, it fell, and became a matter of doubtful speculation instead of an absolute certainty.

While in Exeter I met with a nephew of Lady Beecher, the once-celebrated Miss O'Neill.

This gentleman was the son of her ladyship's favourite brother, who lost his life by the upsetting of a stage-coach; and her ladyship undertook the bringing-up of her nephew by having him educated at Oxford for the Church.

Here in this "seat of learning" he made rapid progress, and, by his literary abilities, was within one of obtaining the prize by his poem on the 'Fall of Babylon;' but when the time arrived for his entering on a curacy, he entered the stage-door of a theatre instead, and made his *début* as an actor. It was in this position I found him in Exeter, and not altogether in a state of elysium.

The short experience which he had had of the histrionic art did not give him a high relish for its details and practical bearings. He soon found that the possession of classic lore, of sterling abilities, were not sufficient to advance the aspirant, and, when too late, discovered that he had made a wrong selection; and this mistake he endeavoured to rectify by abandoning the stage for public readings.

The man who travels through the kingdom delivering lectures or readings—no matter what his talent may be—without name or absolute connection, may calculate on declaiming to a beggarly account of empty benches; and that was the case with Mr. O'Neill, though he was capable of going

through the whole of the tragedy of 'Macbeth' without book.

He told me himself, that in a considerable town he gave a reading,—the 'Merchant of Venice'—to four persons: one was the boots at the inn where he put up, another the chambermaid, the third the gasman, and the fourth the town-crier who had delivered his bills. "And only a few evenings previous," Mr. O'Neill said, "the same room was densely filled to hear a native of the town lecture on the 'Beauties of the Poets,' which discourse he delivered with his hands in his breeches-pockets, uttering the language in so subdued a tone, that he himself appeared the only person that was delighted or alive to the pith of the matter."

Indeed I have known a lecture delivered on 'Dickens' in the same style. The party had so weak a voice and was so deficient in clear enunciation, yet was so tickled by his wit, and laughed so much, that a gentleman rose from his seat and said to the lecturer: "Pray, sir, would you be kind enough to communicate your mirth? I have no idea of you or any other man keeping all the fun to himself."

Readings and lectures are all a lottery in regard to success; talent has very little to do with it. James Russell the comedian, and the best singer of all the actors of his day, once advertised an entertainment at St. Leonard's-on-the-Sea,

Hastings, and performed to five persons, two of whom were admitted free; and a leading London tragedian, in the North, read 'Hamlet' to 7*s.* of a receipt. But the greatest man of all, Edmund Kean, at the age of seventeen, in 1805, announced an entertainment at Dumfries, and the only person that attended was a cobbler, who paid sixpence. Kean, when in his prosperity, gave this Knight of the Last a cheque for 20*l.*

After many vicissitudes of fortune, after enduring the pitiless storm of ill-success, Mr. O'Neill settled in the metropolis, and devoted his mind to literary pursuits.

He contributed a few light pieces to the theatres, and wrote many songs under the assumed name of 'Hugo Vamp.' A specimen of his style of writing may be acceptable to some of my readers :

LINES ON THE FALL OF BABYLON.

"Babylon! where is all thy fame?
Where trace the archives of thy glory?
Where is thy greatness? in a name
As lightly honoured as thy typeless story.
Where are thy pillars? where thy sculptured domes,
Thy towers, thy temples so renowned of yore?
The race who deemed them their eternal homes
Have left these records that they are no more.
But, oh! how lovely in their lone decay,
Each mouldering pile some trace of grandeur showing!
Though all hath perished of the rich and gay,
Their *purser* relics seem with life still glowing.



Methinks that through the hidden veil of time
I see thee, Babel, in thy ancient prime;
Thy fountains, clear as Thibet's golden stream,
Are faintly flush'd with day's departing beam;
Her fretted roofs by classic chisel traced,
Her palaces by every luxury graced,
And every rare incentive that can move
The heart to rapture and the soul to love ;
Her hanging gardens deck'd with fairest flowers,
Her lofty terraces and perfumed bowers,
Her hundred brazen gates of giant mould,
Her temples, lakes, her jewels and her gold.
And she was rich in commerce, on her shore
Did the far East its rifled treasures pour ;
Her lands were fertile, for plenty's bounteous horn
Strew'd harvests in her lap of glittering corn.
Spread forth the feasts, hang out the regal crests,
Belshazzar entertains his thousand guests ;
Fill the goblets to the brim,
Till the red current through our senses swim.
They eat, they drink, till laden with repose
They sink to earth ; when lo ! what death-fraught sound
Angrily echoes o'er the vast profound ?
' Whence are these characters of flame that fall
As lightning-letters on the affrighted wall ?
Why art thou pale, O king ? Ye princes too,
Why blench your cheeks with an unnatural hue ?
Are not earth, sun, moon, stars, the empyreal realms, your own ?
And do you tremble at a power *unknown* ?
Rise, seers of Chaldee, who profess to tell
To wondering earth the mystic rites of hell,
Who rule the spirits of both sea and air,
Reveal that scroll—its hidden source declare—
Who reads that scroll aright, a chain of gold
And robes of purple shall his limbs enfold.'

All are silent; when lo! 'mid priests and seers,
A man of Israel's slighted race appears,—
Daniel—who cries, 'No guerdon will I take, no chain of gold;
No purple mantle shall my limbs enfold;
Yet I will speak, O king. When flush'd with pride,
Thy sire Nebuchadnezzar the Lord of Israel defied;
The arm of vengeance was raised to smite him low—
He suppliant knelt, and mercy staid the blow;
But thou by insolence hast roused *His* ire,
Whose voice is thunder and whose breath is fire.
Know, then, O wicked king! the God of might,
Jehovah's self, hath weighed, and found thee light;
Thy kingdom is no more; and o'er thy brow
Destruction, ruin, death, are hovering now.'
'Make bright your arrows; gather up, ye Medes,
Your warlike shields, the God of heaven leads.'
So spake a voice, a godlike voice on high,
And harnessed thousands answered to the cry.
Still Babel slept; nor did her children heed
The distant shout of Persian or of Mede;
But dauntless cried, 'Our palaces of gold
Shall flourish on till time itself be old.'
Vain-glorious boast. The fell destroyer came;
Wasted her territories with sword and flame;
O'erthrew her towers with more than mortal force,
And turn'd her river from its natural course;
Cast down her temples; what tongue can tell
How, with a mighty crash, her blazon'd splendour fell;
How the fallen pyramid and shatter'd dome
Became the vulture's nest and bittern's home;
How barren heaps and pools of waters waste
The gilded arch and regal bath replaced;
How through the courts where life's gay current flow'd
The Arab fears to take his lonely road,
Or pitch his tent in those dread regions where,



Once the king's pride, now form the lion's lair.
Such is thy doom, O Babylon ! and thou,
On whose jewell'd brow
Kingdoms their crowns reposed, and nations still
Bow'd to the dictates of thy sovereign will,
How art thou fallen ! though the mighty hand
Of Nimrod raised thee mistress of the land,
Scarce history's self can single out the plain
Where Babylon and all her pomp are lain ;
The queenly splendours that were once her own
Lie buried now midst heaps of shapeless stone.
But a *new*-born city shall arise,
Brighter than Babel in her loveliest guise ;
Its walls of jasper, clear as dawning light ;
Its base of sardonyx and ehrysolite,
Where beryl, jacinth, amethyst, are roll'd
In rich profusion over streets of gold ;
Whose fountains rise from streams as bright and clear
As flows the sunny lake of fair Cashmere,
Whose gates of pearl, in lucid radiance drest,
Shall gird the Elysian City of the Blest ;
Where, though no sun or moon by day or night
Shall lend the gliding year its wand'ring light,
Yet the stream of life shall shine with stronger ray,
For God's own face will give eternal day."

This poetic piece on sacred history I have known to excite an intellectual audience when properly delivered ; and in some of the leading towns in England it has met with considerable approbation of no mean order of hearers ; particularly in Taunton, Bridgewater, Sherborne, Wimborne, Exeter, Bodmin, Liskeard, Lostwithiel,

Truro, Falmouth, Helston, Penzance, St. Ives, St. Just, Camborne, Red Ruth, and St. Austle. Mr. Hellyer, a gentleman of rank in the vicinity of Yeovil, declared 'The Fall of Babylon' was a masterpiece of writing. Yet the author, like Goldsmith, was compelled to abandon poetry for bread, and devoted his latter years in the metropolis to the comic Muse. Here, under the assumed name of Hugo Vamp, he gained notoriety for his burlesque style; and if he had been spared to these times—when burlesques are all the rage—no doubt he would have stood forth as one of the best writers in London. But it was ordered otherwise. A fatal cold having seized him in 1858, his weak and delicate frame, which encompassed too much of the ethereal fire, gradually succumbed, and he sank into a premature grave, at the age of thirty-five, lamented by all who had the happiness of his acquaintance. He left an amiable widow and children to mourn his loss.

Although Mr. O'Neill was capable of using his pen in classic lore he fulfilled the common saying, "That there is only one step from the sublime to the ridiculous," by descending to many whimsical productions; one in particular,—a song on the 'Exhibition in 1851,' in which he introduced all the imaginable articles collected from the four quarters of the world. This song I have heard him sing



O'NEILL'S BURLESQUE SONG OF OTHELLO. 317

with great effect. I believe it was never published, nor any of his burlettas. I have obtained possession of two of his songs,—burlesques on 'Othello' and 'King Lear.' I shall quote a portion of the former, merely as a specimen of his comic style of writing.

OTHELLO,
THE BLACK-AMOUR OF VENICE.
(*Recited.*)

If the dark tales of romance
Did your bosoms entrance,
Or render perpendicular your hair,
Now lend me your auriculars,
And for these sad particulars
Your cambric pocket-handkerchiefs prepare.

AIR—" *Gentle Zitella.*"

A gentle Zitella,—so old records say,—
To valiant Othello her heart gave away,
And he fixed his eyes on the lovely lassie,
The fair Desdemona his bride for to be.
And this Othello, the same legends say,
Bewitch'd our Zitella, and bore her away.
The father was frantic, and yell'd out, "Pursue her ;
I'll net this Moor-fowl, and soon spoil her amour."
But this dark Moor was a man of might,
When Venetian power was young ;
And at the sight of his scimitar bright
Turks down their weapons flung ;
For when he raised his brawny arm
And switch'd it round his ear,
Their heads flew about in scarlet rout,
So the Senate his wrath did fear.

And the governor cried when he saw
Which side the Senate espoused, "Ah me!
Then take her, Moor, but of this be sure—
She'll deceive you as she has me."

AIR—"Maiden, I will ne'er deceive thee."

"Maiden," said he, "wilt thou deceive me?"
"Never! never!" "I believe thee.
Come, then, sweet one, we will go
Where at Cyprus roses blow."

AIR—"The Old English Gentleman."

Now while he prattles of corals and rattles,
And both for love grew sick,
One knave, Iago, swore by St. Jago
That pegs that made this music,
He'd soon let down and do quite brown
The fairest reputation,
And shortly too make the fair one rue
Her late Negro-station,—
Did this darkie Venetian gentleman,
One of the *old* one's style.

This knave he called the Moor aside,
And whisper'd in his ear,
"Do you know that one *Casho*
Is flirting with your dear?"
"What!" cried the Moor, "am I abused?
Convince me, slave, 'tis so.
Let me find Ders-de-mony and
I'll pay this *Cash-I-owe*
Like a true Venetian gentleman,
Who lives in first-rate style."
So at dead of night
Crept this Moorish wight,

Or rather Blackamoor,
To her door and cried out,
"I will put her light out,
Though she be the Koh-i-noor."

AIR—" *Buffalo Girls.*"

"'Tis the cause, 'tis the cause—put out the light,
Put out the light, put out the light;
And lest I should shrink from the deed at her sight,
I'll stab by the light of the moon."

AIR—" *There's some one in the house with Dinah.*"

Dere's some one in dis chamber, I know,
Dere's some one in dis room, I vow.
"Mister O, you have been drinking wine, O,
Or never would make this row."
"Have you not been supping with
One gay Lothario?" "No."
"Who's known in every public as
The tipsy Cassio?" "No."
"Where is, then, the handkerchief
I gave you, marked with O?"
"Oh! the deuce has run away with it,
For any thing I know." "Oh!"

AIR—" *Down among the Dead Men.*"

"Oh! perjured woman! your crimes increase;
You're worse than that Helen that wasted grease.
With this same token did Cassio shave,
And by the same token the napkin I gave.
And since you dare this fact deny,
Down upon the bed thou,
Down upon the bed thou,
Down upon the bed, down,
Down, down, down, down—
Down upon the bed you shall strangled die.

The dark deed is done—she is smother'd—all's o'er.
She is dead, and three dead blows are heard at the door."

AIR—" *Who's dat Knocking?*"

"Who's dat knocken at de door?
Who's dat knocken at de door?"

AIR—" *Old Dan Tucker.*"

"Oh! murder, murder, murder, murder, murder, murder,
murder!

My mistress here lies dead, dead, dead.

I see all through the keyhole, some vile knave has duped the
Creole,

And made him kill his wife on the bed, on the bed."

"Get out of the way—don't make such a row;

His wife," says Iago, "was false to her vow.

He found a napkin marked with O

In the pocket-inexpressibles of Cassio."

"You tell a lie, tell a lie, tell a lie, Iago.

Moor, you are gulled; you very much too far go:

I stole the nap, and on it made a large O;

So put that in your pipe and smoke, if you can, O."

AIR—" *Lucy Neal.*"

"Soft, my boys, I'll make no noise—

A word before you go:

I've done the State some service great,

And that you all well know.

Then lend your ears, and when with tears

These late woes you relate,

Whate'er you *tell* of *Otell*-O!

Yet nought extenuate.

Say this act I rue,

And then remind them too.

How with my dirk I stabbed a Turk

Who once lick'd one of you.



GERALD GRIFFIN.

321

I grasp'd him by the throat,
And smote him so and so.
Oh ! sweet Des-de-mona—Des-Des-
Des-de-mo-na, O.*

[Dies.]

Mr. O'Neill is not the first, nor will he be the last, that has cast to the winds the substance of a life's dazzling prospects for the desperate and visionary chances attending on literary efforts.

Otway, the author of the very best tragedy since the days of Shakespeare—'Venice Preserved'—like Chatterton, was starved to death.

Goldsmith's career was one scene of vicissitude and trouble; his end hastened by inexorable creditors.

Another son of the Emerald Isle sunk into a premature grave who on his own loved Shannon produced these couplets, which testify some poetic talent :

"On Shannon side the day is closing fair ;
The kern sits musing by his shieling low,
And marks beyond the lonely hills of Clare,
Blue-rimmed, with gold the clouds of sunset glow;
Hush'd in that sun, the widespread waters flow,
Returning warm the day's departing smile.
Along the sunny highland, pacing slow,
The keyrieight lingers with his herd the while,
And bells are tolling faint from far St. Simon's Isle.
Oh ! loved shore, with softest memories twined,

* The entire version of this song, with music, can be had of the Music Publishing Company, St. Peter's Hill, St. Paul's Churchyard.

Sweet fall the summer on thy margin fair
And peace come whispering, like a morning wind,
Dear thoughts of love to every bosom there !
The horrid wreck and driving storm forbear
Thy smiling strand, nor oft the accents swell
Along thy hills of grief or heart-wrung care ;
But Heaven look down upon each lowly dell,
And bless thee for the joys I yet remember well."

The author of these lines—Gerald Griffin—spent seven years of weary pilgrimage amidst the literary labours of a London life ; and though admitted to the rank of a dramatist, journalist, and novelist, yet he endured three entire days of actual starvation, and suffered so much during his career of storm and sunshine, that his constitution succumbed, and he sunk into the grave at the age of thirty-seven, two years the senior of Mr. O'Neill.

This literary character left behind a work that has been the means of making fortunes for two men. The work alluded to is the novel of 'The Collegians,' or 'Colleen Bawn.'

That splendid life of Gerald Griffin by his brother, and published in Dublin by Duffy, speaks of dramatic matters in London, when George Colman was appointed to a government position as "Reader of Plays."

It appears by this work, that Griffin produced a drama for the Lyceum Theatre, when under Arnold. The manuscript was despatched to Col-



man for perusal previous to performance. Here are Griffin's own words in a letter to a friend:

"But it would, I am sure, make you laugh to see the passages to which the gentleman (in his office of Deputy-Licenser) objected as *immoral* and improper. For instance, he will have no expressions of *piety*, no appeal to Providence in situations of distress, allowed upon the stage. A hymn that I introduced was ordered to the *right about*. A little prayer put into the mouth of my heroine must be discarded. To so scrupulous a man as that what will you say?"

And this man was George Colman, author of the comedy of 'John Bull.'

Let any one peruse this comedy, and they will find cursing and swearing, with immoral allusions, all through it. The brazier, Job Thornbury, Tom Shuffleton, and Dennis Brulgruddery, utter at least four-and-twenty "damns."

So much for *one* of Colman's comedies, and the others are equally as objectionable.

This eternal swearing on the stage, together with indelicate allusions and situations, have done an immense deal of injury to the theatre. Perhaps Colman felt this in his latter years; and by extra fastidiousness conceived he might make amends for the evil he had committed himself.

As Gerald Griffin's sojourn in London was at

the period when the drama began its decline, from 1823 to 1830, and as Griffin was quite of a dramatic turn of mind, having in his youth been attached to a Thespian club in the city of Limerick, I consider the ideas of such a man on the actors and dramatic writers of his day worthy of perusal in these latter times.

It was in Limerick where Griffin made the acquaintance of the author of the tragedy of 'Damon and Pythias' and the 'Tales of the O'Hara Family'—Banim—a man who proved in the hour of adversity a friend indeed, when the author of 'Colleen Bawn' was struggling in the metropolis of England.

Griffin, in a letter to his brother in 1824, speaks of Banim in the following language:

"What would I have done if I had not found Banim? Mark me, he is a man—the *only* one I have met since I have left Ireland." And that was just one year. Well, I think Griffin was very fortunate to be blessed with one friend in so short a time, for Napoleon said, "He never had a friend in the whole course of his life."

It was the noble-minded Banim who introduced Griffin to the management of Drury Lane. It was a most extraordinary event for one dramatic writer to introduce another to a theatre; but Banim himself was presented to the manager of Covent Garden by the author of 'Evadne,' his highly-



gifted countryman, the Right Hon. Lalor Shiel; yet such actions are very rare among writers.

The tragedy of 'Gisippus' was written at the age of twenty, and 'Colleen Bawn,' at twenty-five.

Griffin says: "He perceived the public taste was vitiated, and that the managers, so far from taking any steps to improve it, lent themselves to the childish fancies of the multitude, with all the zeal that a love of full houses and of money could inspire.

"The theatres, indeed, had become the scenes of many exhibitions of an amphitheatrical kind, tending merely to attract the admiration of the *senses*; but of such a gorgeous and imposing a character, that many persons of good taste who longed for a better state of things were for a time dazzled by their brilliancy; while the *literary* portion of the pieces represented had become quite *subordinate*, and was wanting in every quality that could give it the least claim to public attention.

"It is, perhaps, an unhappy circumstance for the poetry of dramatic writing that the portion of the public who can properly appreciate its merits, is but small; and that however theatrical managers may respect the opinions of this *intellectual* minority, it is very seldom their interest to make its approbation a *primary* object."

Hazlitt has asserted the same thing in regard

to the smallness of the number who can appreciate good writing.

It was the degeneracy of the stage that inspired Gerald Griffin with the Quixotic idea of reforming it; and with as much ambition as ever agitated the soul of Cæsar, at the age of twenty he entered London armed with two tragedies, written on the Greek rules. Had he armed himself with 200,000*l.*, and erected a theatre for the legitimate drama, some reform might have been effected. Dr. Griffin "admitted the event proved, after a severe and wasting trial, that the degree of success attained was not worth what it cost; and in the end, brought even to the mind of *him* who was most sanguine of all, the sad conviction that a constitution sapped and shattered by mental toil, and hopes so deeply blasted that no earthly ones could ever take their place again, were too high a price to pay for the 'half of a name,' which he considers his brother had won in the struggle."

Griffin thus speaks of the taste of London in 1824:

"With respect to the taste of a London audience, you may judge what it is, when I tell you that 'Venice Preserved' will scarcely draw a decent house; while such pieces of unmeaning absurdity as the 'Cataract of the Ganges' fill Drury Lane to overflowing every night for three weeks past.

"The scenery and decorations, field of battle, burning forest, and cataract of real water, afforded a succession of splendours I had no conception of; but I was heartily tired of the eternal galloping, burning, marching, and countermarching, and the dull speechifying with which it abounds.

"A lady on horseback riding up a cataract is rather a bold stroke; but these things are quite the rage now."

London actors, years ago, were not in good odour with Alexander Pope nor with Johnson; and Griffin alludes to them in his time. He says: "Of all the people I could have applied to, an actor was the least likely to pay me attention."

But when reduced almost to despair, it was Banim who raised the drooping spirits of the youthful author by prophesying "he would yet hold a very high place on the English stage."

That prophesy has been fulfilled, for 'Colleen Bawn' has in these latter days eclipsed all the dramas which have appeared not only in the Old but also in the New World, or wherever the English language is breathed. The characters created by Gerald Griffin will ever be duly appreciated, for they are nature's children in every sense.

Griffin's opinion of Sheridan Knowles is thus expressed in a letter to his brother:

"Have you read 'Virginius'? It will be worth your while to get it; but if you would retain the good opinion it will give you of Knowles, don't read his 'Caius Gracchus.' It is a poor piece of folly; but either drama will show you that poetry is a cast-off ornament in the drama now."

Certainly Knowles differs from Shakespeare in tragedy, having only produced one that has stood the test of time.

"Milman's 'Fazio,'" says Griffin, "which I admired so much, and do still admire, I have got quite cold about as an acting play."

I should think so, for it was the acting of Miss O'Neill originally that gave it for a limited period an existence; but when she withdrew, 'Fazio' disappeared also. This may account for the failure of several dramas at Covent Garden on the retirement of this actress, acknowledged by Charles Kemble in alluding to the actress who originally played Calanthe in 'Damon and Pythias,' possessing "a singularity of intonation."

Opinion of Young and Macready:

In speaking of his tragedy of 'Gisippus,' Griffin says: "Gisippus is a character for Young or Macready; the former I would rather have undertake it, as I have placed the effect of the piece more in *pathos* than on *violent passions*."

Each London theatre has its author and jour-

nalist. It is the case now, and was so in Gerald Griffin's time, when he undertook to write for the Lyceum. He says to his brother: "The performances at this theatre are of a very peculiar nature; and the fact is, a tailor might as well seek to fit a man without seeing him as one might write for a particular theatre without knowing its performers. You must go and see them, and take their measure, and fit them in a character." Yes, that is true; but how long do the dramas last so manufactured? Colman wrote his comedies for particular actors, and not one has kept possession of the stage, while the 'School for Scandal' and 'The Rivals,' written free and unshackled by the immortal author, are as brilliant now in acting as a century back.

In 1824, on the death of Byron, Griffin, in a letter to his brother, May 18th, says: "You cannot conceive what a sensation the death of Lord Byron has produced here; every individual, in every class, who was not his enemy, talks and looks as if he had lost an acquaintance or a companion. All his errors and wanderings seem to have been forgotten in an instant, and the delight which his genius gave is all that remains in the memory even of the most prejudiced.

"Have you seen Moore's 'Captain Rock' yet? When you do you will remark a note which refers to Banim; a very friendly one.

"The comedy, from which you have seen extracts, is written by the Rev. Dr. Croly, author of 'Paris.' It has had great success on the stage; more, I believe, than it has met from the critics—the wise few—at least those I have seen here and there hint about persons writing five-act farces.

"I have not seen nor read it, but I heard that on the whole it was not worthy of Croly.

"I will tell you now some things which will give you some idea of the drama and the dramatic management of the day, which, however, for the credit of the *métier*, I would not breathe to 'ears profane.'

"Of all the walks in literature, it certainly is at present the most heart-rending, the most toilsome, and the most harassing to a man who is possessed of a mind that may be at all wrought on by circumstances. The managers only seek to fill their houses, and don't care a curse for all the dramatists that ever lived.* There is a rage for fire and water and horses; and as long as it continues, fire and water and horses are the look-out of the sovereigns of the drama. Literary men see the troubles that attend it—the bending and cringing to performers, the chicanery of managers, and the anxiety of suspense, which no previous success can

* At present it is for burlesques, comic pantomimes, and one-legged dancers.



DRAMATIC LITERATURE FORTY YEARS AGO. 331

relieve them from ; and therefore it is that they seek to make a talent for some other walk, and content themselves with the quiet fame of a 'closet writer,' which is accompanied with little or none of the uneasiness of mind which the former brings with it.*

"Kean is going to America ; and Macready, I understand, speaks of entering the Church—a curious idea enough."†

* Ah ! in those days authors never dreamt of coming before the public in order to raise the wind ; and although bordering on starvation, they preferred the dreadful alternative of suffering in private rather than make an exhibition of themselves.

† This idea was very probable, as Macready was educated for the Church ; and it was owing to Mrs. Siddons's suggestion that he embraced the stage. When the elder Macready was away at Newcastle, his son was home for the holidays ; and Mrs. Siddons was at that time on a starring visit to the north. The leading actor of the theatre not suiting the Queen of Tragedy, she requested the manager to allow his son to undertake the part of Biron, in 'Isabella.' The anxious father was shocked at the request, and replied with dignity, that he intended his son for the Church. "The Church !" exclaimed the great actress : "have you any interest,—any patron ?" "None whatever," answered Macready senior. "Well, then, your son will live and die a curate, on 50*l.* or 70*l.* a-year ; but, if successful, the stage will bring a thousand a-year." The wily manager took the hint ; allowed William to appear ; and from that period he got advanced, till, in 1817, he burst on a London public, where a fortune has crowned his efforts. This anecdote I had from the father of Brinley Richards the

Gerald Griffin, lamenting the state of dramatic matters to his brother, bursts out into the following remarks on contributors for the stage.

“For us poor devils, who love the drama well, and are not so confident in other branches of that most toilsome and thankless of all professions, authorship, we must only be content to wade through thick and thin, and make our goal as soon as we may.

“This sawdust and waterwork will pass away, like every thing else, and then, perhaps, the half-drowned Muse of the Buskin may be permitted to lift her head above the flood once more.”

In a letter to his sister, Griffin gives his opinion in regard to celebrity in the following words: “As to fame, if I could accomplish it in any way, I should scarcely try, for its sake alone. I believe it is the case with almost every body before they succeed to wear away all relish for it in the exertion. I have seen enough of literature and literary men to know what it is; and I feel convinced that at the best, and with the highest reputation, a man might make himself as happy in other walks of life.* I see those who have got it as indifferent

composer, in Carmarthen, who was a member of the orchestra of the Newcastle Theatre at the time.

* This conviction Griffin carried into effect when he abandoned literature and the world in the heyday of life.

about it as if totally unknown, while at the same time they like to add to it. But money, money, is the grand object,—the all-in-all. I am not avaricious ; but I see that *they* are the happiest who are making the most ; and am so convinced of the reality of its blessings that, if I could make a fortune by ‘splitting matches,’ I think I never would put a word in print again.”

CHAPTER XII.

The Drama and its objects—Arnold, manager of the Lyceum—Opinion of the English Opera—Lines on the Poets of the day—Griffin's Career—Kemble's progress in London—his Retirement and Death—Conclusion.

I BELIEVE no one ever asserted that the stage was in itself *immoral*; and to destroy it altogether would be, to use a medical simile, to abolish a very *powerful* medicine, because quacks had contrived to make it kill.

Any night on which you prevent a number of people from doing ill and help them to do well is, in my opinion, not badly spent.* St. Gregory did not deem it beneath his gravity to write a play.

At the time when the Church launched its

* As a proof of this, the body of people who leave the theatre and go straight to their homes in a temperate sense, will derive more advantage from their evening's recreation than many opposers of the drama can boast of in their nocturnal feastings among the elect.

thunders against the scene, it certainly was deserving of censure; but we are reforming.

Griffin, in a letter to his sister in America, speaks of his labours and struggles in London :

“Why, I have yesterday written a play, which is to be published this week with a most laughable illustration by the Hogarth of the day, George Cruikshank. There’s dramatic fame for you !

“Only fancy the modest young Munster man spouting his tragedy to a room full of literary ladies and gentlemen,—some of high consideration too. The applause, however, of that circle on that night was sweeter, far sweeter, to me than would be the bravoës of a whole theatre at present, being united at the time to the confident anticipation of it.

“One of the people present got me an introduction to an actor. He was very polite; talked and chatted about himself. Presented him with my new tragedy for inspection. He kept my play four months; wrote me some nonsensical apologies about keeping it so long, and cut off to a starring campaign, leaving orders to have it sent to my lodgings without any opinion on it.

“Those who had the least knowledge of theatricals said I had acted unwisely in putting a play into an actor’s hands; and added, ‘but few managers can be trusted either.’

"It was then that I set about writing for those weekly publications,—all of which, except the 'Literary Gazette,' cheated me abominably. Then finding this to be the case, I wrote for the great magazine. My articles were generally inserted; but on calling for payment, seeing that I was a poor inexperienced devil, there was so much shuffling and shabby work that it disgusted me, and I gave up the idea of making money that way.

"I now lost heart for every thing; got into the cheapest lodgings I could make out. A thousand and a thousand times I wished that I could lie down quietly and die at once and be forgotten for ever."

Yes; Gerald, after being located in the aristocratic quarter, Regent Street, had to move to "poet's corner," in one of those crevices called an alley, similar to the *locale* of his countryman, Goldsmith.

In consequence of the degeneracy of his wardrobe, he could only walk forth in the shades of evening to smell the ripe harvest of the fresh-cut flowers in Covent-Garden Market.

Although reduced to the lowest state of penury, and feeling the pangs of hunger for three entire days, he never for a moment meditated on self-destruction. That desperate act would have indicated the want of courage and the want of religion,

both of which he possessed ; but endured patiently his fate, wisely reflecting, that "when things come to the worst they generally mended;" and this turned out true, for a friend, Mr. Foster, introduced him to a publisher, with whom he was engaged to arrange, regulate, and revise for a salary of 50*l.* a-year.

His first task to revise was a *fashionable journal*; and on perusing it, he said to himself, "Why, hang it, I can write better than this at any rate!"

That's more than probable; and perhaps that article, so inferior in Gerald's eyes, was contributed by the proprietor's son or son-in-law. Family connections have a deal to do with literary matters as well as state-affairs.

However, Gerald now found that good fortune was in his way; and he received an invitation from the editor, and says: "I went to his country-house (this excellent character afterwards committed suicide), and found him there with his wife—a very elegant woman—and family, surrounded by harps, harpsichords,* a piano, piazzas, gardens; in fact, a perfect palace within and without.

"I have the satisfaction to see, and he sees it too,

* To the present generation, the harpsichord as well as the spinet are unknown: the former was in the shape of a grand piano, and the latter partook of the same form, but scarcely five feet in length.

my articles quoted and commended in the daily papers; satisfaction, I say, as every thing of that kind gives me a firmer hold of the paper. The theatrical department is left altogether to me; and I mortify my revengeful spirit by invariably giving — all the applause he could expect, or in justice lay claim to.”

It is strange that Gerald does not give the names or initials of the managers or actors who had treated him so ungentlemanly. I suppose the latter individual must be the actor who kept his drama four months and then sent it without any apology.

“Mr. W., the editor, has given me a new engagement on a new weekly publication, and also on one of the quarterly reviews. This, you must know, is no slight honour; for all the other contributors are the very first men of the day. The review appears on the same day in four different languages in four countries of Europe. Thus things begin to look in smiles upon me at last. I have within the past fortnight cleared away the last of the debts I had incurred here; with the good fortune of meeting them in full time to prevent even a murmur. With the assistance of Heaven, I hope my actual embarrassments have passed away for ever.”

In another to his mother in America he says :

"I have taken the situation of parliamentary reporter for a session ; not that I needed it, but it will be of great use to me to know all the usages of the House and the manner of the talking senators of the day.

"How I should wish we were all here ! I can quite enter into Johnson's sentiments with respect to London, and into those of Madame de Staël with regard to Paris. There is no place like a great metropolis for a fellow who cannot content himself with the quiet ease and security of a still life, or rather who is naturally of a spirit so irregular and so dependent for the proper exercise of its energies on the excitation of outward circumstances, that he must be continually in the way of that excitation if he would not lead a neutral life.

"You tax me with my illegible writing ; but I fear I cannot amend it, for I must not stay to shape my letters ; and I have, I believe, got a bad habit from the facility with which the printers here make it out. I verily believe if I shut my eyes or flung the pen at the paper, so as to make any kind of mark, the *London printers** would know what I intended to say.

* This I readily believe, and fully indorse, from my own experience among them. I have been in communication with printers in most of the towns in England, Ireland, and Scotland, Wales, France, Belgium, Holland, Germany, Italy, Portugal, and the Channel Islands ; but I must give the palm of praise

“What a dull, mechanical, imperfect mode of communication this is though, of writing, and reading, and speaking! Why cannot we invent some more rapid and vivid means of transferring our ideas? Why cannot we commune in spirit or by intelligence?”

I suppose Gerald means to converse in pantomime; but how could it be conveyed to a distance, unless *short-hand* was taught in every school in Europe, and thus a more rapid system introduced? Perhaps it is a matter of as much impossibility as that which Dryden thought of, when he was preparing for the Church, to preach in verse.

Gerald says: “The first night I attended the House I had the Chancellor of the Exchequer’s speech to report—a deuced cramp piece of work, as Tony Lumpkin says—and I understand my report gave high satisfaction. You, my dear father, would be surprised, I daresay, if you heard some of those folks speak who enjoy so high a reputation for parliamentary eloquence. There are many whom I supposed persons of extraordinary ability; and I am astounded, on seeing them get up in the House, to find what absolute blockheads they are. H., for instance, is the to the London printers for their skill in deciphering illegible scrawls as well as for the celerity with which they get their work out of hand.

most stupid, tiresome, actual ass that ever opened his lips. It is solely to the reporters he is indebted for the straightforward sensible air his speeches assume.*

"I procured an introduction from Dr. Maginn, LL.D., to the editor of the 'Literary Gazette,' and got an engagement from him to furnish sketches, &c., at a very liberal remuneration—a guinea a page."†

Remarks on Gerald's trials and temptations in London.—On calling to mind the countless instances in which the bright treasures of nature and grace hoarded up during early youth, the purity of moral feeling and deep religious reverence cherished in that innocent time, are squandered, spoiled, and sunk in the corruption of a great city, we cannot help turning with an affectionate and admiring interest to those favoured individuals who never for a moment lost the consciousness of their worth, but preserved

* As Gerald was disappointed in this popular character, so was one of our patentees in regard to a popular tragedian. Many years ago, a London manager took an actor as partner, and this actor made his *début* in Othello. The manager attended, and at the conclusion of the tragedy was asked what he thought of him. The Thespian potentate exclaimed, "Good gracious! is that all my partner can do?"

† Much better terms than the poet Byron alludes to, writing "for half-a-crown a line;" for while the poet is spinning his brains for half-a-dozen lines, the prose-writer will fill a couple of pages without much labour.

them with unwasted faith amid circumstances involving the doom of thousands.

It is true there is something in the pursuit of literature itself which tends to preserve the mind from the contamination of the grosser passions; yet, while it raises a barrier against these, it is still open to many dangers not perhaps of a less serious character. It may be doubted, indeed, whether the mind is more truly darkened by the grovellings of sense than by the blind pride of intellectual ascendancy which prompts it, while it glories in its freedom from the tyranny of a lower nature to plunge with a bold scrutiny into the mysteries of religion, to believe itself omnipotent as it is all-searching, and to treat every thing as an absurdity which it is unable to explain. Such dangers as these too are the greater the higher the intellectual pre-eminence.

They too often end in scepticism, irreligion, and infidelity; and it may be said that there is seldom a more signal triumph of morality and religion over the corruptions of the world than when a young and gifted mind, reared in the simplicity of an unthinking virtue, is suddenly flung into such society as besets it in a city like London, and comes out of its gloomy atmosphere with the light of its early truth unclouded.

 *A description of Gerald's person in 1826, by*

his brother Dr. Griffin, after three years' residence in London.—"On my arrival in London from Edinburgh, in the month of September 1826, I found him occupying neatly-furnished apartments in Northumberland Street, Regent's Park. I had not seen him since he left Adare, and was struck with the change in his appearance. All colour had left his cheeks: he had grown very thin; and there was a sedate expression of countenance unusual in one so young, and which in after years became habitual to him. It was far from being so, however, at the time I speak of, and readily gave place to that light and lively glance of his dark eye, that cheerfulness of manner and observant humour which from his very infancy had enlivened our fireside at home. Although so pale and thin as I have described him, his tall figure, expressive features, and his profusion of dark hair thrown back from a fine forehead, gave an impression of a person remarkably handsome and interesting."

Arnold's opinion in respect to the taste of the English for operas, in a letter to Gerald Griffin, 1825.

"Theatre Royal, English Opera House, Jan. 12.

"SIR,—I am much afraid you will not find the drama answer your expectations in performance—an opinion I the more regret, as the poetry in general appears to be much *above* the ordinary rank; and as I see by your letter, which accom-

panies it, that you have given much attention to the subject of operatic writing.

"I am unfortunately compelled to differ with you also in your ideas of the nature of the genuine English opera.

"You are of course aware that such *recitative* operas have been frequently tried, though 'Artaxerxes' is the solitary instance of any one keeping possession of the stage. But I am so absolutely certain that the taste of the English public is yet so decidedly opposed to recitative, that, with all my admiration for the higher order of the musical drama, I must be strongly tempted indeed by the poem and the composition before I would venture on so hazardous and losing a speculation. You may have noticed last season, in the introduction of 'Tarrare,' that I introduced a much larger proportion of recitative than has ever before been tolerated since the time of 'Artaxerxes;' and I am convinced it is by gradual and judicious advances alone that the town will be ever brought to sanction it.—I remain, sir, your obedient servant,

"J. ARNOLD."

I perfectly agree with Arnold that the English are opposed to recitative; and very properly too. The idea is truly ridiculous that two persons on the stage should hold a dialogue with a musical accompaniment. A song is natural, but the other

is not. As the Italians are the inventors* of the opera, and the language is in accordance with such a composition, it is all very well; but the fact of John Brown and Bob Smith holding a conversation with a flute obligato would set the whole theatre in a roar.

Arnold appears, in his letter to Griffin, to doubt the success of his drama in the performance, in consequence of its *higher* order of poetic talent.

Certainly in those days, and later, the dramatic writers could not be challenged with poetic flights even of mediocre quality; for Gerald says that in modern tragedy "poetry is a cast-off ornament." But if we peruse the comic writers—Sheridan, Colman, and O'Keefe—we shall find in 'The Rivals,' 'John Bull,' and the operatic farce of 'The Poor Soldier,' scraps of poetry that may be called of the higher order; for in those times, when the legitimate drama was in its zenith, no trifling, dry, or farcial writer could enter the lists against such an array of talent as Sheridan, Colman, O'Keefe, Inchbald, and the elder Morton.

On Puffing.—Gerald says: "Every day shows me more and more of the humbug of literature. It is laughable and sickening. What curious ideas I had of celebrity before I left Ireland! Even the Waver-

* The first opera that was ever produced was in Florence, on the occasion of the marriage of the Grand Duke of Tuscany, and performed in the Pitti Palace.

ley Novels were by the Northerners puffed into life; but are now defunct. Nothing is done, nor can be done, without puffing. Here I see a man puffed by his own family, and a good writer puffing himself—men of talent writing in one periodical, and replying to it—criticising and praising the particular article—in another.”

Gerald describes another princely publisher's palace: “Mr. W. has a perfect palace, with Corinthian piazzas, gardens, vines, and the Lord knows what; a magnificent apartment with low windows going to the garden; on one side a splendid double-action harp, for which he gave, as he *says*, three hundred guineas (?); on the other side a grand piano; his wife, a pleasing woman, but no great shakes of a dancer. We settled that he should give me 100*l.* a-year, and, to make assurance doubly sure, to be paid weekly. I have just been scribbling off now 200 lines of an epistle to Liston, on his return to London; for such an *interesting* subject—poetry, of course!”

The Catholic meeting at Freemasons' Hall, when O'Connell, Shiel, and Lawless addressed the public, did not make a deep impression in London. Gerald says to his brother: “You have a queer notion on the other side of the water that your concerns are greatly thought about here. It is a doubt to me if the ‘dear little island,’ ‘the gem of

the sea,' were swallowed by a whale or put in a bag and sent off to the moon, if the circumstance would occasion any further observation than a 'dear me!' at one end of the town (the west), and a 'my eyes!' at the east end, unless, indeed, among the Irish mining speculators, or some gentlemen equally interested."

According to the following remark by Griffin, absolute talent is a secondary consideration with publishers: "It is a fact well known to all who have made any attempts in literature, that the circumstance of a writer being known or unknown to the public makes immensely more difference as to his chance of acceptance with a publisher than the amount of talent he possesses."

There is no denying this. Let a writer produce *one* good novel at the first, and on the strength of that impression he may inundate the whole town with absolute trash; and what's most extraordinary, people can be got to read it.

Certainly such novels die a natural death in a few years, as others spring up, perhaps a little better, and take their place, while the *one* good work *may* see immortality.

In 1827, Gerald Griffin published the 'Tales of the Munster Festivals,' consisting of 'Suil Dhuv, the Coiner,' 'Card Drawing,' and 'The Half Sir.' This work created a great interest in

London. 'Suil Dhuv' was dramatised by Tom Dibdin, and had a considerable run. Another of the tales was put into a dramatic shape, and performed at the English Opera House under the title of 'The Spirit of the Hill.' As this latter piece was not published, I got possession of the tale, and dramatised it for the purpose of a benefit in the provinces, where it was well received. Gerald's great work, 'Colleen Bawn,' passed unheeded by the dramatists, and was reserved for another age, when a man whose skill so handled this beautiful and natural story, that nations flocked to witness the young Munster man's legacy, and Dion Boucicault's name will ever be associated with that of Gerald Griffin.

Griffin declared "Thomas Moore was no poet."

It may appear extraordinary that such an idea should exist that the author of 'Lalla Rookh' and the 'Meeting of the Waters' was no poet. Gerald, in a conversation with his brother on the merits of Moore, said "that if many of the most remarkable passages in his writings were analysed, they would obtain for him rather the character of a great wit than a great poet."

There is no accounting for the opinions of literary men upon one another. In regard to actors, I ever considered that the public were the proper judges; so must it be in regard to literature.

Gerald Griffin was an intense admirer of the genius of Campbell, Scott, and Byron, while Shakespeare, Dryden, Pope, Swift, and Goldsmith are left unnoticed. Both Scott and Campbell, in a poetic sense, I venerate; but cannot say I look on them as the equal of the names rehearsed. For this I may be condemned by some. However, it may be, except in one instance, a matter of opinion.

Griffin has left some lines respecting men of his day,—men who have their admirers; and as the lines are written with point, I shall give them:

“Wordsworth and Coleridge, and Landor and Southey,
Are stupid and prosy and frothy and mouthy;
Like A and H they sit side by side,
True brotherly emblems of dulness and pride.
From morning till night they sit staring and blinking,
And striving to make people think they are thinking;
Like four Irish parsons oppressed with the dumps,
Or like my poor grandmother's pig in the mumps.
Compared with such garbage, the trash of a Tennyson
To me is a haunch of poetical venison;
Or Bulwer as deep as the sky in a lake,
Till the mud at six inches reveals your mistake.”

In giving this sketch of Gerald Griffin, I may have departed from the object of this work in treating so much of literary characters; but as several of the names I have touched upon have been more or less connected with dramatic matters, I conceived that every thing relating to the career of

such a gifted man as the author of 'Colleen Bawn' would be received with favour.

Gerald Griffin began to waver in his hopes of making a stand in London, if we may judge from his own words: "I should like, if possible, to commence the study of some profession that might at one time or another render me independent of this scribbling. The uncertainty of the life it has been my fortune to adopt is horrible." With this idea he entered as a law-student the London University, which had just opened, under Professor Amos. But the law did not satisfy him; and after this he produced a historical Irish novel—the 'Invasion.'

A work of Griffin's, the 'Aylmers,' was brought out at the English Opera with great success. "The poor forgotten 'Aylmers,'" he says, "has been dramatised; and see my luck! The drama I told you I had lost by the coach-office was founded precisely on the same story; and here another fellow runs away with my poor bantling, dresses him up in his own swaddling-clothes, and plunders me."

Such tricks have ever been common in London.

In 1817, a poor plundered author — Lyons, brother of the first Mrs. H. Bishop — told me that he had sent to Covent Garden a drama called the 'Robbers of Bohemia.' In the course of a few weeks the manuscript was returned to him, with a note stating, "Not adapted for the house."

Some time after a new melodrama was announced at Covent Garden—‘The Miller and his Men;’ and here, in this piece, Lyons found the plot and characters of the ‘Robbers of Bohemia.’ He never could obtain any redress for the unprincipled plunder of his property.

Managers are not always the best judges. Even Garrick himself, although the author of several pieces, was deficient in sound judgment. An author sent to the great Roscius the manuscript of a tragedy, and Garrick read it, and returned it as unsuited for the stage. This drama the elder Colman, at Covent Garden, accepted, and it created in performance quite a *furor*. This was the Rev. Mr. Home’s tragedy of ‘Douglas,’ and acknowledged as the best since ‘Venice Preserved.’

Not only authors, but every class of men of genius, have, in their early struggles for fame, been subject to vicissitudes; and even emperors and rulers of every description have roughed it before being trusted with the helm of state.

Let us go back to the first Napoleon, and view him a subaltern on 4*s.* 2*d.* per diem; then take a glance at the nephew, immured five years and a half in a dungeon, studying political economy and the life of Cæsar. And here, in the present day, England has added a name to her list of noble and brilliant patriots—Richard Cobden—whose prema-

ture end has cast a mourning not only on this nation but in the Legislative Assembly of France, where one unanimous voice burst forth in accents of grief for the loss of the most disinterested statesman who ever sat in the House of Commons. Yet Cobden had to labour in the stern realities of life before his mind was matured for the position he filled with such renown in the commercial affairs of his country. That mountain of learning, the never-to-be-forgotten Samuel Johnson, walked to the metropolis with his townsman David Garrick, and between the two could just muster fourpence-halfpenny; and another no less renowned and immortal character—Oliver Goldsmith, the author of the most finished poem in the language—entered London under no less depressed circumstances; and before he could arrest the attention of the great men in the Row, was obliged to act as a drudge to a petty vendor of physic in the city.

The *élite* of the dramatic art have not been exempt from their share of hardships in their probationary wanderings. The Kembles, Siddonses, Keans, O'Neills, Downtons, Listons, Mathews, &c. have felt the keen hand of penury in their time. Edmund Kean had to labour in his youth for fifteen shillings a-week, and act, dance, and sing, ere he received his hundred pounds for one performance. But then he had been gifted with

patience and perseverance, and well knew nothing but practice could fit him for his high destiny, and that that practice is not to be had in the Theatre Royal, but in the barn or outhouse.

It is the same in literature as in theatricals. **Man** must toil and abide his time; and that time is sure to come, sooner or later. But in regard to the author of 'Colleen Bawn,' it came too late; for he was in his grave when Macready produced his tragedy of 'Gisippus' at Drury Lane, in 1842; an event which fully testified his claim to rank as one of the legitimate dramatic writers of his age.

The splendid paintings and engravings extant of bygone actors give the present generation an idea of how such gifted sons of Thespis looked; but how the finest of them all, the *beau-ideal* of an Othello and Romeo—Barry—escaped the notice of the artist, is inconceivable; for we have not a likeness of this elegant and accomplished actor in existence.

Such neglect cannot be alleged in regard to the noblest Roman of them all—John Kemble.

Sir Thomas Lawrence and some of our best engravers have devoted their transcendent talents to the portraying of those classic features designed by nature for the men who kept the dramatic world in awe.

Although Kemble was inferior to both Cooke

and Kean in overpowering energy, yet he surpassed them in stately dignity and figure. Kemble too had advantages not always found in a theatre—a classic training; and that which was a drawback to Edmund Burke*—an education in a Catholic seminary—was Kemble's stepping-stone to the favour of royalty, and ever made him a welcome guest at the tables of the dignitaries of the Church.

On the 30th of September 1783 John Kemble made his first appearance at Drury Lane in 'Hamlet;' and neither the manager nor the public were altogether satisfied on the occasion. At the conclusion of the tragedy Sheridan raised up his hands and exclaimed, "Good heavens! is that *all* he can do?" It certainly approached as near to a failure as possible; but his sister, Mrs. Siddons, having made a tremendous impression some time before, that sort of thing in London induces the people to bear a great deal; and consequently Kemble was tolerated, and gradually and steadily advanced in public favour. In private life his costume, fine Roman head, clerical proclivities, and austere and stately bearing, gained a position which no other actor ever achieved before or since; but when 'Pizarro' appeared in 1798, Kemble's Rolla

* This was a vulgar error. Burke was not educated at St. Omer's, but in Trinity College, Dublin,—for the law.

fairly stamped him the first tragedian of the age. 'Pizarro' ran for thirty-two nights. This was the longest the people in London ever submitted to before that time; and this was entirely owing to the combined talents of John and Charles Kemble, Barrymore, Dowton, Mrs. Siddons, and Mrs. Jordan; aided and assisted by scenery, processions, flags, banners, music, combats, fires, and all other methods brought together to dazzle the thinking and unthinking.

When Kemble was appointed stage-manager of Drury Lane, his fine classical taste and judgment saw at once the ridiculous costume handed down from the days of Shakespeare and Garrick—such as a stiff-skirted coat for Othello, breeches, waistcoat, black face, white full-bottomed wig, and three-cocked hat. He accordingly searched the engravings and paintings of former ages, and had the historical drama dressed in the proper costume of its period. This great benefit to the legitimate works of the country must be ascribed to John Kemble and to no other.

During the short peace of Amiens, Kemble visited the Continent. His appearance is thus described by a Parisian journal:

"Mr. Kemble has a fine figure, and appears to be from thirty-six to forty years of age; his hair is dark, and the marked character of his features

gives him a physiognomy truly tragic. He understands and speaks perfectly well the French language, but in company he appears to be thoughtful and uncommunicative. His manners, however, are very distinguished; and he has in his looks, when he is spoken to, an expression of courtesy that affords us the best idea of his education. He is said to be well-informed and a particularly good grammarian, which distinguishes him from English actors, who are more attentive to noise and attitude than diction. The Théâtre Français has received him with all the respect due to Le Kain of England; they have already given him a superb dinner, and mean to invite him to a still more brilliant *souper*. Talma, to whom he had letters of recommendation, does the honour of Paris; they visit together our finest works, and appear to be already united by the most friendly ties."

In 1818 Edmund Kean, on his visit to Paris, met with the same honour from the French actors, and the prince of actors—Talma.

In 1802 died Roger Kemble at the age of eighty-two; and John Kemble lost his highly-gifted mother in 1807.

As the London actors in those days were not remunerated with large salaries, it surprised the town how John Kemble became possessed of the means of purchasing a share in Covent Garden in



1803; but this mystery was soon cleared up when it became known that the Duke of Northumberland advanced 24,000*l.*, and afterwards, in 1809, when Covent Garden fell a prey to the burning elements, gave another loan of 10,000*l.* The bonds for both sums his grace in the most gracious manner requested Mr. Kemble to convert into a minor illumination, after the great one which had consumed the national theatre.

Kemble retired in 1817; and in March of the same year finally bade adieu to that profession his name had adorned in Edinburgh in 'Macbeth.' Sir Walter Scott, his friend and admirer, wrote the following address, which that accomplished actor delivered before the *élite* of Modern Athens:

"As the worn war-horse at the trumpet's sound
Erects his mane, and neighs, and paws the ground;
Disdains the ease his generous lord assigns,
And longs to rush on the embattled lines,—
So I, your plaudits ringing in mine ear,
Can scarce sustain to think our parting near,—
To think my scenic hour for ever past,
And that these valued plaudits are my last.

But years steal on, and higher duties crave
Some space between the theatre and the grave;
That, like the Roman in the Capitol,
I may adjust my mantle ere I fall.
My life's brief act in public service flown,
The last, the closing scene, must be my own.
Here then adieu! while yet some well-graced parts

May fix an ancient favourite in your hearts—
Not quite to be forgotten even when
You look on better actors, younger men ;
And if your bosoms own this kindly debt
Of old remembrance, how can mine forget ?
Oh, how forget how oft I hither came
In anxious hope !—how oft return'd with fame !
How oft around your circle this weak hand
Has waved immortal Shakespeare's magic wand,
Till the full burst of inspiration came,
And *I* have felt, and *you* have fann'd, the flame !
By mem'ry treasured, while her reign endures,
These hours must live, and all their claims are yours.
O favour'd land ! renown'd for arts and arms,
For manly talent and for female charms,
Could this full bosom prompt the sinking line,
What fervent benedictions now were mine !
But my last part is play'd, my knell is rung,
Whene'er your praise falls falt'ring from my tongue,
And all that you can hear, or I can tell,
Is—friends and patrons, hail, and fare ye well !”

In 1818 Kemble began his continental tour, even as far as imperial Rome ; and, strange to say, was the only English actor except Garrick, his brother Charles, and the writer of this, who ever trod the Forum of the once-mistress of the world.

The 28th of February 1823 brought the classic actor's career to a close, at his villa on Lake Lemman, Switzerland, at the age of sixty-six. Thus was the stage deprived of Coriolanus, Brutus, Cato, Rolla, and Zanga ; for all these parts died with him.

His will was registered in Doctors' Commons

in 1828; the effects sworn under 10,000*l.* Mrs. Hatton, an authoress known as Ann of Swansea, was left 60*l.* a-year; another sister, mother of Charles Kemble Mason, the trifling sum of 20*l.* a-year; the rest came to his widow and his brother Charles.

Although John Kemble had all his life been accustomed to speak the finest language in existence, yet his own, to judge of his literary and oratorical attempts, was very poor and meagre indeed. He was the author of a melodrama, 'Lo-doiska,' and a pantomime, 'Alexander the Great.' Now, whether this last effort was a comic pantomime or no, I am unable to say.

Kemble, in 1789, altered Bickerstaffe's comedy of 'It's well it's no worse' into a farce for Mrs. Jordan—'The Pannel;' and Johnson's 'Country Lasses,' into a *petite* comedy, under the title of the 'Farmhouse.' Besides these pieces, he arranged and altered several of Shakespeare's plays.

Harry Stoe Van Dyk, author of 'Theatrical Portraits,' has bequeathed some beautiful lines on "the noblest Roman of them all." An extract from these I offer to the reader as a *finale* to this, my strange eventful history.

"The proudest of the Romans, where is he?
The hero of Corioli,* who fell
Amidst his enemies, in majesty,
Like some high tower or mighty citadel,

* Coriolanus.

Sinking among the foes who storm its wall,—
 Grand in its ruin, noble in its fall?
 And where is he whose evil spirit stole
 At midnight to his tent? * And he, † whose soul
 With fortitude and stoic firmness bore

The tidings of his son's untimely doom,
 Yet sank at last—and sank to rise no more—

With the departed glories of lost Rome?
 Where, where are they? Alas! they once have been;
 But vanished, fled, when Kemble left the scene.
 No more he strikes beholders' hearts and eyes
 With all the lightning of his energies;
 No longer sways the rabble with his nod,
 Nor stands at Volscium tow'ring like a god
 With valorous might, which hostile force disdains;
 No more he thunders o'er Philippi's plains,
 Nor charms the breathless senate with th' intense
 And soul-felt magic of his eloquence.
 Yet will he live when many a loftier name
 Shall seek the nothingness from whence it came.

* * * * *

Oh, may his mind in calm retirement gaze
 'Through the long vista of departed days,'
 And all the honours he obtained before
 Come back, like sweet reality, once more
 To soothe the thoughts of retrospective age,
 And cheer the close of life's brief pilgrimage!
 Then shall Melpomene bewail his doom,
 And strew her leaves of cypress round his tomb;
 And say, whilst mourning Kemble's fall,
 This was the noblest Roman of them all! "

* Brutus.

† Cato.

THE END.

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